A Multiple Case Study of Mandatory Professional Development, Change, and Transformation

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Abstract

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Laurie Bobley

Higher education institutions are making significant investments in online education and are implementing comprehensive new programs to teach faculty how to become effective online instructors. These investments often come with significant strings attached that require that changes be made across the board to efficiently accommodate 21st Century teaching and learning tools and techniques.

The purpose of this multiple case study is to explore the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated professional development to learn how to effectively design and deliver online courses. An additional purpose is to determine the elements of professional development that create opportunities for transformative learning and impactful change in faculty teaching practice.

This qualitative study collected data from semi-structured interviews and surveys, and from a review of online courses artifacts that were generated as a result of the mandatory professional development initiative. The data demonstrated that mandated professional development was generally perceived as a positive signal for organizational change, but professional development needs to be highly targeted to specific interests and levels of digital fluency. Mandated professional development enabled the faculty participants to see new possibilities and potential for their online practice. The results of this research may provide insights into how professional development can be designed to help faculty transform their online teaching.

Chapter 1

Introduction

As reported in a 2013 Sloane Consortium survey of 2,800 U.S. colleges and universities, the number of students taking at least one online course increased over the previous year by 33.5% (Allen & Seaman, 2014). To keep pace with demand, many institutions are offering courses, programs, and even degrees in online and blended formats to parallel their traditional brick and mortar offerings. In fact, in 2012, 62.4% of the colleges report that they offer fully online degree programs, nearly double the number offered in 2002 (Allen & Seaman, 2013). It follows that approximately 66% of the chief academic leaders from institutions report that online education is critical to their long-term strategy, and this positive response has risen steadily since 2002 (Allen and Seaman, 2014). Central to this shift in higher education is the fundamental challenge to provide training and support to faculty who teach online (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, & Freeman, 2014; Herman, 2012).

Some institutions provide little in the way of professional development related to online pedagogy for their online faculty, and instead center their efforts on preparing the faculty to use the learning management system or on faculty training related to the mechanics and technical skills to teach online (Keegnwe & Georgina, 2012; Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Schmidt, Hodge, & Tschida, 2013). However, both technology skills and knowledge of online pedagogy are two critical areas for effective course design (Meyer, 2012: Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Vai & Sosulski, 2011). This leads to the issue that many institutions are struggling with their faculty's lack of digital fluency (Dahlstrom & Brooks, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014) and their application of best practices to design and

deliver online courses (Ko & Rossen, 2010; Palloff & Pratt, 2011; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Vai & Sosulski, 2011).

Many instructors do not receive adequate professional development before teaching an online course, or they receive some training, and with good intention, simply transplant their brick and mortar course into an online format (Lackey & Rhodes, 2011; Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010).

While most of the competencies for effective online instruction are the same as those for effective classroom instruction, a body of research indicates that there are competencies unique to online teaching (Ko & Rossen, 2010; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Vai & Sosulski, 2011). While elements such as provision of rubrics, specific grading criteria, due dates, learning objectives, policies, and meaningful assessments are elements common to any good course design (Ko & Rossen, 2010; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Vai & Sosulski, 2011) other elements are unique to teaching online (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). For example, without a physical space in which to meet the class, the interaction between the instructor and students, and among students must be reimagined and intentionally designed (Howard, Schenk, & Discenza, 2004; Lehman & Conceicao, 2010). The lack of visual cues in an online class can add to that missing interaction. The primary method of communicating in an online course tends to be text-based, whereas in a brick and mortar setting, there is continual verbal and visual interaction (Palloff & Pratt, 2011). The online instructor does not have room for immediate questions and answers so any instructions must be crystal clear for students to readily understand. The lack of immediate feedback can also affect the student experience. The visual design of the course in a learning management system is not something an onsite instructor may be

concerned with, but an online course that provides explicit instructions and is organized and easy-to-navigate can help both the student and teacher (Baran, Correia, & Thompson, 2011; Vai & Sosulski, 2011). Borgemenke, Holt, & Fish (2013) stress the significance of a consistent and reliable online course structure and unambiguous instructions as "online instruction can add another level of cognitive loading if the student must relearn how to access course components as they matriculate through their program of study" (p. 17). They suggest that students' cognitive loading may be reduced when "course components are presented with consistency and designed with clarity in mind" (p.17).

When faculty transition from brick and mortar to online teaching, they may not be aware of these differences until they are exposed to them, which often occurs through faculty professional development. Yet, exposure alone may not ensure that the competencies necessary for effective online instruction are developed or sustained. Professional development may assist faculty in developing these competencies.
Some strategies for online course design and delivery appear to affect student outcomes. These include, providing opportunities for student self-reflection and self-assessment, individualizing the learners' experience (Means et al., 2010) and increasing student interaction with the content, the instructor, and with other students (Lin, Dyer, & Guo, 2012; Means et al., 2010). These ideas are not new to teaching, but the ability to add these to online practice may need to be learned. Tallent-Runnels, Thomas, Lan, and Cooper (2006) reviewed the literature from 76 studies related to online courses and online instruction and determined that four themes emerged as a special concern for online courses: the course environment, learners' outcomes, learners' characteristics, and institutional and administrative factors. The authors point out that course environment is

a significant factor that influences effective online courses and online instruction. It includes instructor presence, the development of a learning community, and interaction between and among students and instructor, particularly as it relates to higher cognitive levels of interaction with course content (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). When tasked with the process of designing an online course, faculty are forced to rethink their ideas about way they teach (Means, Toyama, Murphy, Bakia, & Jones, 2010). The authors recommend that online course design be based on research, not on traditional classroom course design models Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006).

A 2010 U.S. Department of Education funded meta-analysis of 99 studies focused on a comparison of online and classroom-based education (Means et al., 2010). The wide range of studies that were examined include undergraduate and graduate courses, work-related training, as well as a small number of K-12 studies. The comparison also included medical education and non-medical education, and older and more recent studies and encompassed a variety of sample sizes and study designs. The findings suggest that the learning outcomes of students in fully online courses are slightly, but not significantly better than the learning outcomes of students in conventional face-to-face courses. The authors note that apart from the format, online and onground courses can, and do, vary greatly on multiple factors that affect learning, factors such as curriculum and pedagogy, and this needs to be considered when interpreting these findings (Dell, Low, & Wilker, 2010; Means et al., 2010). Although the results derived from this study point to learning outcomes for students in an online environment being at least comparable to those in a traditional classroom environment, faculty who teach online may not believe that they have adequate support to teach online (Regan, Evmenova, & Baker, 2014).

Past research does not adequately address how faculty in higher education experience mandated professional development related to online teaching methods and technology integration, nor does it indicate the impact of the development efforts on faculty. Further, changes that higher education faculty members go through when professional development is mandated may be different from those when they are not mandated.

Statement of the Problem

As colleges and universities begin transformational changes to improve their online courses and programs, they must take steps to ensure that the online faculty, who ultimately implement the change, accept the need for change and actualize it in their practice. Institutions seeking transformational change require that faculty also transform their perspective and beliefs about their practice.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online and to determine whether faculty learning led to impactful change in teaching practices and attitudes toward online learning.

Significance of the Problem

There is a lack of research related to the experiences of higher education online faculty who have participated in mandated development activities to teach online. In a search of peer reviewed journals alternately using the terms “faculty development,” “staff development,” and “professional development” and the words “higher education” or “college” or “university” and the word “mandated” in ProQuest and EBSCO search

engines none of the records generated were related to the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated development to teach online, rather the following were found.

In the field of health sciences, there is a substantial body of research that deals with faculty development opportunities based on state or professional mandates to advance elements of practice or to maintain professional status (Campbell & Parboosingh, 2013; Cornelius & Glasgow, 2007; Drummond-Young, Brown, Noesgaard, Lunyk-Child, Maich, Mines, & Linton, 2010; Ostrow & DiMaria-Ghalili, 2005). There is also a significant body of research that addresses district, state, and federal mandates that drive professional development for K-12 teachers (Breault, 2007; Summerville & Johnson, 2006; Verkler, 2003) and in turn, allows teachers to keep professional certification status (Winton & Catlett, 2009) or improve the use of technology (Caverly & Fitzgibbons, 2007; Davidson, Richardson, & Jones, 2014). Verkler (2003) and Winton and Catlett (2009) indicate that the regulations for K-12 teachers, also create the need for higher education institutions to incorporate new curriculum or course requirements. There is a marked gap in the literature surrounding mandated professional development for higher education faculty to teach online.

Across the study site's home state, 5.6% of the graduate students are enrolled in distance education courses exclusively, while 6.5% of graduate students are enrolled in some distance education courses. In private, non-profit, Title IV colleges (those meeting requirements to receive federal funding), 13.8% of graduate students are enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, and 28.5% of graduate students take some online courses. About 14% of graduate students take some or all of their courses online in

the Graduate School of Education where this research will take place (Digest of Education Statistics, 2014).

This institution is located in a major northeastern city in the United States. The Graduate School of Education was recently engaged in a self-study to fulfill accreditation requirements. Regional and discipline-specific accreditation agencies such as the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) and the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) regard online education as a separate and significant area for evaluation of program effectiveness. Their criteria require institutions to provide evidence that students taking online courses and programs receive the same level of education as students in brick and mortar courses. Evidence includes faculty credentials, student satisfaction, attainment of course and program learning outcomes, and in professional programs, results of student achievement on state certification and licensure examinations. The two-year self-study that took place established that learning outcomes were equivalent between formats and full accreditation was granted in 2012. The other equally positive outcome was that the Graduate School of Education wanted to continue the newly enhanced focus on continuous improvement, quality assurance, institutional effectiveness, and self-reflective dialog that was guided by empirical evidence.

Through the self-study, the graduate school determined that online courses needed more consistency and that professional development for faculty teaching online courses should be reconsidered. The self-study also suggested that:

1. Faculty transitioning from a brick and mortar classroom to an online environment required more focused support.

2. Current online faculty needed additional assistance
    a. with online course design and pedagogy
    b. using emerging technologies for teaching and learning.

As a first measure to address the self-study findings and to initiate a period of targeted improvement, the college began another program-wide review of the online courses by contracting with two separate organizations that deal specifically with online course evaluation and improvement. The results from both assessments validated the findings of the Graduate School of Education's self-study: There was a variance across the courses in course design and consistency of course delivery. Recognizing this gap as a solvable issue, the administration proposed a professional development series to strengthen online instructional practices and improve the use of technology for teaching and learning with purposeful, targeted professional development. One problem with the department's plan for a new professional development initiative existed: A precedent had been set – attendance at previously offered opportunities for professional development was never required – now it would be mandated.

Research Questions

This research will address the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of online teaching faculty participating in mandatory professional development to teach online?

2. How has mandatory professional development impacted online faculty course design and delivery?

3. What specific elements or experiences during a mandatory online professional development program had the greatest impact on faculty professional practice?

The answers to these questions may inform higher education institutions about how professional development can influence faculty to reexamine their own teaching through the acceptance and implementation of innovations derived from professional development.

Conceptual Framework

This study proposes qualitative research that explores the perceptions and experiences of higher education faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online and to determine if faculty learning led to impactful change in teaching practices and attitudes toward online learning. The conceptual framework encompasses three main themes: organizational change, individual transformational learning, and the impact of professional development. The intersections of these three literature streams provide the basis for the study. This study seeks to explore the experiences of faculty who have participated in professional development and the impact of those experiences on organizational change and individual transformative learning.

For an organization to experience transformational change, the type of change that "includes radical changes" in how individual and collective members "perceive, think, behave at work," individuals involved in the change need to experience an internal personal change that leads to changes in the external, organizational processes and structures (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Henderson, 2002, p. 186).

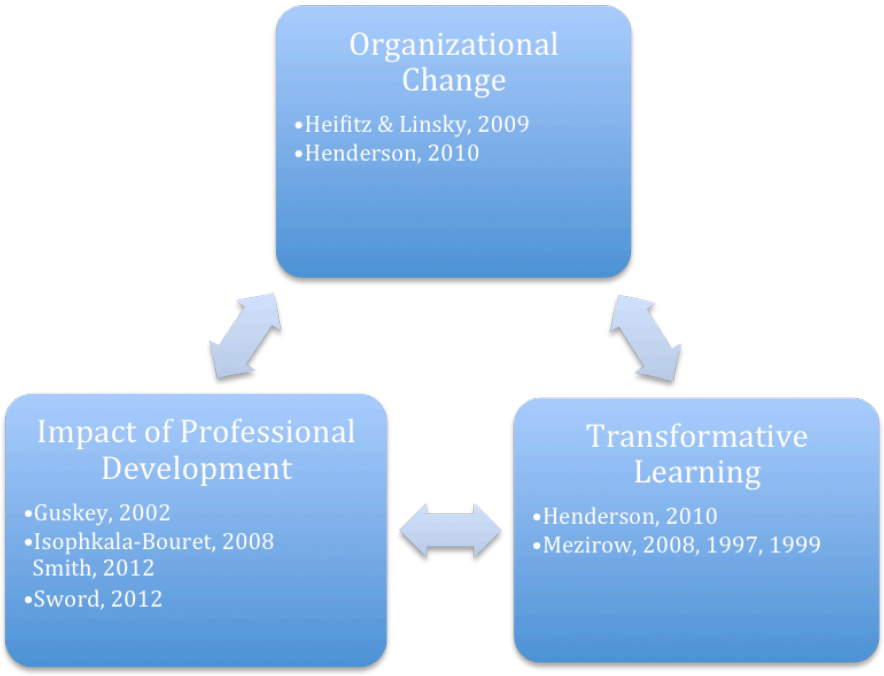

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

As colleges and universities evolve in an effort to meet the demand for online courses, there is a resultant need to reexamine the ways that face-to-face courses are redesigned for online delivery. Online learning is "part of the modern transformation of higher education" (Bach, Haynes, and Smith, 2006, p. 5), and this shift affects faculty directly. This transformation is partly propelled by the advance of information and communication technologies, globalization, and increased competition in all fields, which has in turn, created the need for more and more "adjustments" in "innovative organization designs, new work processes, and new knowledge creation" (Anderson & Anderson, 2010; Henderson, 2002, p. 186). The sustainable transformation of higher education cannot be realized without the individual members, including faculty, adopting new ways of thinking and working, and actualizing their own deep change (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009; Henderson, 2002) through a change in perspective (Henderson, 2002; Mezirow, 1991, 1994).

Organizational Change

Transformational organizational change is deep and pervasive and reflects a renegotiation of the values, expectations, and conventions related to the processes and procedures of those involved in the change (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). This type of organizational change is comprehensive and cannot be accomplished quickly (Eckel & Kezar, 2003). Organizations face multiple challenges when a comprehensive change is required.

Heifetz and associates (2009) differentiate between two types of challenges that arise when organizations are faced with change: technical and adaptive. Technical challenges are those that can be solved by using the processes and strategies that are already in place in the organization. Modest changes may occur, but there is little new learning and the "fix" is typically quick and resolved through a basic, routine response. Adaptive challenges are much more complex to solve because they require deep change. Specifically, to reduce the gaps that are identified for the organization to meet its goals, adaptive challenges require that the people in the organization participate emotionally, intellectually, and with commitment to the outcomes (Henderson, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). Transformational organizational change cannot occur unless those who are involved in implementing the change are committed to replacing their old habits, beliefs, and assumptions with the new (Heifetz et al., 2009; Henderson, 2010; Mitchell, 2009). According to Henderson (2012), "Commitment, then, implies a personal decision to participate at an intellectual and emotional level, not a response to a directive from a higher authority or social pressures" (p. 207). Without adopting new attitudes, values, and behaviors, people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new

environment.

When higher education institutions propose changes that may impact how online courses are designed and delivered, there are intentional and unintentional ramifications for members of the faculty who teach those courses (Mitchell, 2009). In some instances, the faculty are required to conform with new processes and procedures (Henderson, 2002; Mitchell, 2009). But for other aspects of the change, there may need to be a personal commitment by individual faculty members to make adjustments in their roles, in their attitudes, or in their behaviors as well (Henderson, 2002). These adjustments constitute transformative learning.

Transformative Learning

An examination and comparison of organizational change and transformative learning literature by Henderson (2002) proposes that the process of achieving transformational organizational change cannot be accomplished without personal, transformative learning on the part of the people directly involved in the change (Henderson, 2002).

Transformative learning is grounded in the idea that human beings understand the world by interpreting experiences through a unique, individual frame of reference. A frame of reference "encompasses cognitive, conative, and emotional components" and involves the relationship between habits of mind and the resultant point view. It constitutes an individual's "meaning perspective" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 5; Mezirow, 2000).

An individual's frame of reference is shaped by culture, language, and prior experience; those social, physical, and emotional experiences that serve as educational

events beginning in early childhood and occur in and out of the home (Mezirow, 1997, 2000). When we critically reflect on our beliefs, assumptions, and then come to a new understanding and interpretation of these deeply rooted ideas, our frame of reference shifts.

Mezirow (1994) described ten phases of transformations. Henderson (2010) described the phases as four core elements: A trigger or disorienting dilemma, critical reflection, discourse with another, and action.

Table 1 outlines Mezirow's ten phases of transformation in comparison to the four core elements described by Henderson (2010) essential for transformative learning.

Table 1. Comparison of Mezirow's Phases of Transformation with Henderson's Core Elements

Mezirow's Phases of Transformations (1994)	Transformative Learning Core Elements (Henderson, 2010)
1. A disorienting dilemma	1. A trigger or disorienting dilemma
2. A self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt or shame phase	
3. A critical assessment of assumptions	2. Critical reflection
4. Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change	3. Discourse with another
5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions	
6. Planning of a course of action	
7. Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans	
8. Provisionally trying new roles	
9. Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships	4. Action
10. A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective	

Transformation is often triggered by a disorienting dilemma that forces the learner to critically reflect on previously held assumptions (Mezirow, 2000). The dilemma most often confounds cognitive frameworks though which an individual filters a situation. Alternatively, the dilemma can challenge "a person's life stance, her way of being in the world-which becomes unstable" (Willis, 2012, p. 2013). It may be sudden or may manifest gradually (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). Critical reflection and discourse bring new perspectives to the forefront as previously held views and assumptions are made visible and are challenged (Mezirow, 1994, 2000). "To assess and fully understand the way others interpret experience requires discourse, and to understand and assess the reasons for their beliefs and understandings requires the ability to become critically reflective of their assumptions and our own" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 15). Further, new perspectives and understandings that develop act to guide personal changes and individual growth (Mezirow, 1994, 2000).

Transformative learning is based on the idea that each individual has unique experiences and points of view that influence how experiences are perceived. Through self-reflection, the underlying assumptions and habits of mind are challenged and new perspectives may emerge. When an organization is determined to change, individuals in the organization may go through an internal change process as a way to adjust to and accept the change (Henderson, 2002).

One element of online education that continually changes is the variety of information and communication tools made available for teaching and learning (Henderson, 2010; Schols, 2012). It can be both challenging and transformative when faculty are tasked by the institution to learn to use these tools and to apply the associated

teaching strategies.

Impact of Professional Development

Online education is still relatively new and largely considered an innovation in higher education, and faculty are struggling with transitioning to the online environment and with using new technologies (Fang, 2007; Johnson et al., 2014). Additionally, challenges exist with learning new pedagogies and designing ways of interaction that are appropriate for an online environment (Fang, 2007; Johnson et al., 2014). If changes in instructional practice can lead to improved student outcomes, then faculty professional development may be the key to enact those changes. Yet, research indicates that professional development is often unproductive or unsustainable (Fang, 2007; Fein & Logan, 2003; Guskey, 2002; Storandt et al., 2012).

Shagrir's (2013) research attempts to define patterns of higher education faculty's professional development involvement. Her analysis of 24 faculty members' worldviews, opinions, and descriptions revealed three distinct patterns: "A pattern of those who are rarely or never involved with professional development (pattern A); A pattern of those who are often involved in development, but primarily when they receive guidance (pattern B); A pattern of those who intensively engaged in development (pattern C)." Understanding these patterns can help higher education institutions plan and provide more effective support and influence the impact of the professional development activities on teaching and potentially on the institution.

Guskey (2002) points out that many professional development efforts are ineffective because the factors that motivate teachers to actively participate in the activities are overlooked, and the process of how change in teachers occurs is not well

understood. He proposes that the dynamics of teacher change may be contrary to the general perception that teachers' attitudes and beliefs change as a precursor to implementing an innovation (strategy or tool) into their instructional practice. In this model, the implementation leads to improvements in student learning. Instead, Guskey (2002) suggests that it is only after teachers see the gains in student achievement, that they experience changes in their attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions. Further, when results are palpable, the improvements are then repeatable and sustainable and the innovation is truly adopted. Equally, if there is no evidence of improved outcomes, the innovation is often abandoned (Guskey, 2002).

Another challenge to maintaining and sustaining an innovative intervention, such as those introduced in faculty development may appear to be a form of resistance to change. Van Tiem, Moseley, and Dessigner (2012) posit that in some cases, individuals in the organization resist change because they have been conditioned to do so. Conditioning most likely occurs because a pattern develops related to interventions that have been introduced into an organization, but, for any number of reasons, fade away. If this is a pattern in an organization, when a new intervention is introduced, sustaining it is not a priority, as those who are tasked with implementation may believe that the intervention will eventually be forgotten or dropped (Van Tiem et al., 2012). The result is that the pattern is reinforced and no changes occur.

The effectiveness of professional development in education is not commonly measured with regards to sustainability of results or processes that worked, or on the impact on students' learning. Instead, professional development has traditionally been evaluated through surveys of participant satisfaction or self-reports of a change in attitude

or an intention to innovate (Desimone, 2009: Zehetmeier, 2014). While these evaluative measures provide some insight into the success of professional development efforts, understanding the factors that specifically influence participant learning and sustainable impact may provide direction for planning more effective and targeted professional development (Haskins & Shaffer, 2011; Zehetmeier, 2014).

This study explores the perceptions and experiences of faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online. Five faculty members participating in a professional development program that was designed to enhance online course design and delivery were interviewed. The goal was to understand what, if any, elements of the professional development were most important to them and were perceived to have the greatest impact on their practice.

The results of this study may assist those involved in faculty development planning more effectively, may provide a guide for better institutional support for faculty development, and may assist in identifying strategies that can influence and sustain faculty professional development. Even more, factors related to how faculty may create sustainable positive changes in online instructional practice may be revealed.

Definitions

- *Asynchronous learning* is learning supported by discussion boards, email, social networking, screencasts and other tools that do not require the user/participant to be online at the same time as any other participant (Hrastinski, 2008). Additionally, media such as live chats, webcasts, and video conferencing tools can help the instructor approximate the face-to-face teaching and learning environment (Hrastinski, 2008).

- *Asynchronous technologies* allow users to learn and to contribute at their convenience and include discussion boards, email, social networking, and screencasts.
- *Discourse* refers to the "back and forth" interaction between faculty and between faculty and students (Henderson, 2010).
- *Face-to-face teaching*, *onsite teaching*, *brick and mortar,* or *traditional classroom teaching* refers to teaching that is conducted in a physical classroom.
- *Innovation* is "an idea, practice, or project that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption" (Rogers, 2003, p. 12). In this sense, following Rogers' definition, the challenge of using a new technology or a adopting a new educational approach is synonymous with innovation, since it offers an alternative to the prevailing practice.
- *Online education* can be described as teaching and learning that takes place partially or entirely over the Internet (Means et al., 2010). In this study, the term online education used interchangeably with the term distance education.
- *Professional development*, *faculty development*, and *faculty education* relate to the variety of learning experiences related to faculty learning, and will be used interchangeably in this work.
- *Reflection* involves the critical examination of one's own values and beliefs. For learners, it can involve connecting experiences to educational material (Henderson, 2010).
- *Synchronous technologies* allow users to learn and to contribute in real time and include live chats and video conferencing.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

This study explored the experiences of online faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online.

Assumptions

The college administration wanted to improve the design and delivery of online courses, but historically, change has been initiated by a top-down approach. This is problematic because a mandated professional development initiative may affect faculty motivation to make changes in online courses.

Limitations

This research was conducted at an independent urban institution, focusing on the specific experiences of online faculty in a graduate education program who participated in mandatory professional development to teach online. A limitation of this study is that the participants do not serve as a representation of all graduate education online faculty who successfully complete professional development and then do, or do not, implement new technologies and methods into their online courses.

The researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis and must remain unbiased and objective throughout the qualitative research process (Litchman, 2013, Merriam, 2009). The researcher is also a member of the institution and is one of the facilitators of the mandated professional development initiative. The variety of data collected, member checking, and peer review will reduce the influence of the researcher's perspective on the findings.

Delimitations

The study will be conducted in one independent college in a large urban setting which limits the scope of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As a multiple case study, the experiences of five faculty members will be explored. The faculty will be chosen based on their motivation to add new elements into their online courses.

Summary

Chapter 1 presents an introduction to the proposed research to explore the experiences of faculty who have participated in mandated professional development and to develop an understanding of the experiences of faculty as they relate to transformative learning and organizational change.

Chapter 1 also includes definitions of terms related to this study to attempt to understand the experiences of higher education faculty as they engage in required professional development. Chapter 2 reviews the literature related to theories of adult learning, faculty attitudes, and barriers to learning. Chapter 3 explains the research design, methods for collecting and analyzing data, and information regarding site and participant selection. Chapter 4 provides the findings and results of the data analysis. Conclusions derived from the intersections of the theoretical and empirical research are outlined in Chapter 5, as are recommendations and implications for higher education leadership, faculty developers, and for future research.

Chapter 2

Introduction

This study explores the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online. Chapter 2 serves as a basis for developing and conducting this research study and presents literature related to organizational change, transformative learning, and the impact of professional development. This study is designed to address a gap in the literature on mandatory professional development for online faculty.

Literature Review

Organizational Change

Organizational change typically begins when leadership sets new policies or a direction for the organization and individuals and groups within the organization are compelled to comply with the directives from the top. Colleges and universities instituting initiatives to develop, expand, or refine online education commonly fall into this category for change (Mitchell, Parlamis, & Clairborne, 2015) and, by default, the faculty become both the recipients and agents of change, as they are ultimately responsible for implementing the change (Mitchell et al., 2015).

Organizational change can take two broad forms. One form involves "applying existing know-how and applying the organization's current problem-solving processes" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008, p. 448) and results in a modification of the existing systems and processes (Henderson, 2002; Walton, 1999). The second type of organizational change is much more complex as it creates a challenge to existing values, behaviors, and norms (Henderson, 2002). This type of change requires a transformational shift because it

"demands that people give up things they hold dear; daily habits, loyalties, ways of thinking" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008, p. 448) and the ultimate solution to the problem at hand relies on the people in the organization changing their ways (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008; Henderson, 2002).

In their study of organizational change for the 21st century, Bridges and Mitchell (2000) describe change as the pathway to innovation. Yet, anticipated change can be exciting, stressful and threatening (Lane, 2007). Moreover, the organizational change process involves dynamic, and often taxing, negotiation with individuals involved in the change and can cause instability and uncertainty in the organization (Curry, 2010). Mandated change can exasperate individual emotions and rock organizational stability even further.

When the change process creates conditions to reshape individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, those involved in the change may encounter a sense of loss for the past, anxiety for the future , and they may experience a challenge to their sense of self (Bridges & Mitchell, 2000; Lane, 2007; Mitchell et al., 2015). As the directive to change is often imposed as a top-down directive, it may have a timeline that requires immediate implementation for the changes. As such, it may not include a process for transition. Transition is internal and occurs more slowly. "Transition is the state that change puts people into" and acts as a buffer for individual change (Bridges and Mitchell, 2000.p. 1). Transition involves the recognition and eventual acceptance that change is occurring. "Getting people through the transition is essential if the change is actually to work as planned. When a change happens without people going through a transition, it is just a rearrangement of the chairs" and resistance is likely to be strong (Bridges, 2009, p. 3).

However, a certain amount of upheaval is required not only to transition through the change, but also to create a path toward acceptance of the change. Bridges & Mitchell (2009) assert that there is "a psychological reorientation that people have to go through before the change can work" (p. 2). Still, resistance to change can thwart improvement. Lane (2007) found that an individual's perceived value of what the change will bring and the magnitude of the change affect how readily a change is accepted.

Organizational change is relevant to this study because the research site took the initiative of mandating professional development for faculty after a self-study of its programs. The evaluation pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the program's online course design, as it existed. In reaction to the evaluations, institutional and departmental leadership jointly determined that faculty professional development was required to support and expand the strengths and minimize the weaknesses that were identified in the reports.

The proposed change to improve online course design and delivery through faculty development is a mandated initiative that is expected to have a positive effect on course design, delivery, and potentially on student outcomes. For change to be long lasting, it needs to be institutionalized; the change must be complete and the individual, group, or community transitioned into a new way of doing things (Curry, 2010; Fullan, 2011; Lee & Krayer, 2007; Moseley & Hastings, 2004; Rasile, 2008; Schein, 2008; Van Tiem et al., 2012). Yet, a request for change implies that the current state, behaviors, or attitudes may not be satisfactory. Individuals required to make changes may perceive the professional development directive as a personal criticism and are likely to resist (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008).

Barriers to change need to be anticipated and attended to so that any potential resistance can be minimized (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008; Schein, 2008; Van Tiem et al., 2012). One strategy to help individuals accept new routines and processes is to enable each of them to become aware of their own roles and power in the change (Schein, 2008). Likewise, creating opportunities for cooperative planning and implementation of change initiatives by the practitioners and the leaders increases the likelihood that the change will be sustained (Fullan, 2011: Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007). Sustainable change requires a loss of the old and acceptance of the new idea, perspective, or habit. A change in perspective is a condition, the primary condition, for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1994, 2000).

Transformational Learning

The theory of transformational learning is grounded in the idea that when individuals are faced with a challenge to their beliefs, values, or behaviors, through critical reflection and discourse they experience a shift in how meaning is made. This shift then alters how perspectives are translated into actions (Mezirow, 1991). Meaning perspectives relate to how we perceive and understand the world around us and are part of our established assumptions that guide us in interpreting new experiences and making judgments (Mezirow, 2012).

As an illustration of this, the social environment in higher education presents “an *invitation* to think, to be, and to act in new and enhanced ways," and from that, challenges to existing ideas and understandings can surface (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012, p. 389, italics in original). Students and faculty can emerge from the experience with new perspectives, a re-envisioned sense of self, and/or a change in worldview (Kasworm &

Bowles, 2012, p. 389). This change can also occur in faculty when they participate in professional development; they may experience a change in perspective and beliefs about teaching, which can lead to taking action in the form of adjustments to their practice.

As a constructivist theory of how adults learn, Mezirow focused on the importance of perspective transformation (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Mezirow, 2012). Our frame of reference, that from which we interpret and evaluate is based on our own unique meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 2012). Mezirow (2000) argues that transformative learning is the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action.

Transformative learning typically involves participation in constructive discourse with another person or with a group (Cranton & Hoggan, 2012; Henderson, 2010; Mezirow, 1994). Discourse allows an individual to learn about and use the experiences of others to assess her own personal assumptions. If the individual comes to a new understanding and her frame of reference shifts, her actions will reflect the new insights gained from the new perspective (Mezirow, 2000, p. 7).

In a review of 250 articles published from 1994 to 2009 that present transformative learning of adults in a higher education setting, Kasworm and Bowles (2012) determined the following:

- a perspective transformation involved learner change on "perspective, worldview, or sense of self"

- the process of change can be initiated either by the learner or through the setting or situation
- in most cases, the transformative change was self-reported, and the change was associated with assumptions related to the self or to the individual's world-view (p. 389).

Some of the articles were concerned with the learners' experience toward "openness and engagement toward change" or on how conditions such as "programs, instructors, instructional experiences support or trigger a transformative learning process" (Kasworm and Bowles, 2012, p. 389).

One concept highlighted by Kasworm and Bowles (2012) is that transformative learning is unique to the individual as it be triggered by different circumstances or ,may begin at different points, and each individual experiences it differently. A variety of factors, such as relationships, or context, or environment may influence the change. Still more, individual transformation may not necessarily occur until later (Kasworm and Bowles, 2012).

When a mandate related to teaching is involved, some faculty may interpret this as a challenge to their abilities and competencies. A disorienting experience, such as this, may create an opportunity for deep and critical reflection. Critical reflection along with communicating about the meaning, consequences, or potential of the event promotes transformation (Taylor, 2008). This points to the idea that the reason some individuals succeed in acquiring a skill, developing new knowledge, or generally overcoming a challenge may not necessarily be due to ability or intelligence, but instead may be because of whether transformative learning has occurred.

The 2015 Horizon Report for Higher Education describes the online learning environment as a natural venue in which to integrate emerging educational and communication technologies (Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, Freeman, 2015). Yet, when trying to appropriately and effectively apply technology innovations to improve practice, faculty may feel the "pressure to constantly revise courses, implement new methodological approaches, and remain in what is essentially a constant state of personal training and skills development" (Amirault, 2012, p. 254). The pressure to apply innovations coupled with the relatively low digital fluency of higher education faculty can create a complex challenge in higher education systems (Johnson et al., 2015). This is what Heifetz et al. (2009) describe as an adaptive challenge because individuals need to learn a new way of operating in a changing environment (Schols, 2012). Henderson (2012) refers to this type of change as transformational. For the individual, the prospect of this kind of change creates conditions for transformative learning to occur (Henderson, 2002).

Critical reflection is a core process associated with transformative learning (Taylor, 2008). Making meaning from any given experience necessitates filtering that experience through what is already understood. It requires critiquing our values and beliefs. Only when meaning is made, can action be taken, be it in the form of a decision, a change in behavior, or an action (Henderson, 2002; Mezirow, 2012). When faculty are faced with learning new technologies or teaching online and potentially making substantial adjustments in their practice, they have the opportunity to critically reflect on their identities as educators (McQuiggan, 2012).

In a one-semester, qualitative, longitudinal study of five academics from five distinct disciplines, Henderson and Bradey (2008) explored faculty members "identities as professionals in their field, as an educator in the specific discipline, and the pedagogical decisions the individual makes...in the context of a web-enhanced learning environment" (p. 86). They reason that identity is a "complex personal understanding...of what it means to teach and learn in a professional degree program" and as such, exerts a strong influence on the individuals' perceptions and understandings about teaching and learning (Henderson & Bradey, 2008, p. 85). Attending professional development, they suggest, does not necessarily change beliefs about instructional practice, but if the faculty are given the opportunity for critical reflection to "reveal and explore the multiple identities that underpin that practice," they are likely to have a smooth transformation and a revised and renewed vision of teaching (Henderson & Bradey, 2008, p. 87).

In a phenomenological study, Sword (2012) explored the perceptions, experiences and needs of nursing faculty who transitioned from a traditional classroom to an online environment. He reported that some of the faculty felt computer illiterate as they experienced frustration and feelings of inadequacy when they were asked to teach online and had difficulty with basic computer and word processing skills, like cutting and pasting. The faculty participants also experienced a sense of loss and added stress because what worked in a brick and mortar setting, did not translate well to the online environment. As an example, the nursing faculty reported that there was little opportunity for creative lecturing, group work, or on-the-spot feedback to students. In addition to a marked lack of organizational resources and support, they perceived less warmth, a

diminished feeling of connection to students, and felt their own reduced teaching presence in their courses (Sword, 2012).

Sword (2012) identified a pattern of progression for nursing faculty to adapt to the new online teaching environment and suggests that the gradual adoption of new ideas is most effective. For some of the faculty, the challenge of teaching online was exciting, and one faculty member compared her experience to being a "pioneer". Understanding what the pioneer felt excited about is critical to understanding transformative learning. The term "pioneer" implies that the new instructional territory that the faculty explored was not part of their prior experiences or frame of references. Simultaneously, however, the group of faculty felt that teaching online was frustrating because of the lack of training. It was both disorienting and challenging to try to learn new ways to design and provide instruction. While the nursing faculty did adapt to the new format, they felt disillusioned with the institution because of the lack of support and they continued to doubt their own online teaching abilities (Sword, 2012).

When we are faced with a challenge to our views of how things should be, we have an opportunity to critically reflect on our own perspectives (Taylor, 2008). If we continue to challenge and reflect on those perspectives, a shift in perspective may follow and a new way of thinking may emerge (Cranton & Taylor, 2012). Still, transformation is not easy: it is complex, it is personal, and it is emotional (Merriam & Kim, 2012). It involves a deep and fundamental shift in assumptions (Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Henderson, 2002; Mezirow, 2000; Taylor, 2008). This study explores the potential transformative learning experiences of online faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online.

Impact of Professional Development

The growing demand for online education (Allen & Seaman, 2013) requires a renewed, targeted focus on the design and delivery of online courses and programs as "online learning is in the midst of a long-term reinvention" (Johnson et al., 2014, p. 7). The need to make online learning more engaging, adaptive, and personal is helping to drive the momentum to improve course design and delivery, and with that, the necessity to help faculty develop technological and pedagogical skills (Roman, Kelsey, & Lin, 2010). A growing number of institutions offering online courses now require faculty to record video or audio lectures and feedback, schedule real-time office hours, orchestrate online cooperative learning opportunities, and are beginning to make provisions for faculty to provide the same content in several formats (audio, text, visual) to address the needs of the variety of learners in a given course. This push is further evidenced in the growing number of educational companies and in-house, homegrown "research-supported, best practice-based quality standards" courses and rubrics to improve online course design and delivery (Quality Matters, 2014). For example, Quality Matters, the Online Learning Consortium, and learning management systems like Blackboard Learn offer courses to educators to learn to teach online (Blackboard, 2015; Online Learning Consortium, 2014; Quality Matters, 2014).

Two factors have been identified as critical to online course design: knowledge of pedagogy that deals with teaching online and faculty technology skills. Even so, many institutions are struggling with their faculty's lack of digital fluency (Dahlstrom & Brooks, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014) and their application of best practices to design and deliver online courses (Ko & Rossen, 2010; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Vai & Sosulski,

2011).

To explore faculty experiences with online teaching and to determine their professional development needs, Taylor and McQuiggan (2008) surveyed Penn State University faculty who taught at least one course online. The responses indicate that faculty felt "inadequately prepared to effectively design, develop, and facilitate reflective online teaching experiences" and want "assistance with effectively adapting their teaching to an online environment" (p. 35). This suggests that some of the competencies required to teach online are different from those required in a traditional classroom setting (Amirault, 2012; Baran et al., 2011; Johnson et al., 2015; Storandt et al., 2012). The lack of preparation to teach online has been reported elsewhere (Fein & Logan, 2003; Lowenthal, 2008; Storandt et al., 2012) and the inadequacy of support while teaching online has been noted (Fein & Logan, 2003; Storandt et al., 2012).

The most common preparation that is offered to faculty before they teach online is related to course mechanics and technology to support the online course (Storandt et al., 2012, Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). This preparation typically includes navigating the Learning Management System, posting announcements, sending email, and accessing and grading student work. Meyer (2012) asserts that without adequate training on instructional design, even instructors with advanced degrees may not be equipped to develop high quality online courses. Instructional design that is geared to online teaching has the potential to lead to more productive teaching and improved student outcomes (Meyer, 2012). For quality online courses and programs, faculty need support for learning the technology required to deliver the course (such as, a learning management system) and in the technology to deliver content and assess knowledge (video, audio,

wikis, blogs, inline-grading, creating electronic rubrics, etc.). And, the faculty need to learn strategies to teach online (Storandt et al., 2012).

One theory related to the process by which an innovation gets adopted is Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovation theory. The framework describes that adoption within any given system is largely based on the dissemination of information about the innovation and the social influences toward the adoption of the innovation. Rogers (2003) defines five categories of innovators who adopt innovation at various rates: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards.

Rogers (2003) contends that when faced with any innovation, an individual goes through a decision-making process that involves five stages of gathering and processing information:

- Knowledge – simply being exposed to the fact that the innovation exists and subsequently determining its purpose and how it functions.
- Persuasion – the innovation is evaluated and the individual forms a positive or negative attitude toward it.
- Decision – this stage involves the individual rejecting or adopting the innovation. Rejection may occur after trying the innovation or may occur without any consideration of ever adopting the innovation.
- Implementation – while the innovation is adopted in this stage, it may not be with full confidence.
- Confirmation – this stage is influenced by whether the innovation is perceived as an advantageous contribution to the individual's own particular situation. At this point the innovation may still be rejected.

This decision making process may be quick, or for some individuals, could take years

to eventually decide to adopt an innovation (Rogers, 2003) and may be affected by the users' digital fluency (Dahlstrom & Brooks, 2014; Johnson et al., 2014). Innovations that are proposed through faculty development activities are suited to be studied through this lens.

To understand higher education faculty experiences related to using and integrating technology, Educause Center for Analysis and Research (ECAR) conducted a survey of 151 higher education institutions from 13 countries. Fifty-nine percent of the 17,451 faculty respondents report that they do not believe that their institutions have a clear strategy for online teaching and learning. The top three reasons that would motivate faculty to integrate more technology into the curriculum are a "clear indication that students would benefit," "a better understanding of technologies that are relevant to teaching and learning," "and confidence that the technology would work" the way it is expected to work (Dahlstrom & Brooks, 2014, p. 26). Dahlstrom and Brooks (2014) contend that the way instruction is delivered when a course is moved online is significant.

Faculty members' impressions and beliefs about teaching are greatly influenced by their lifetime experiences as students and by observing how their own teachers taught (Baran et al., 2011; Henderson & Bradey, 2008; Lane, 2007; McQuiggan 2012). Individual personalities, learning preferences, and professional identity can also influence faculty teaching practice (Henderson & Bradey, 2008) and potentially their inclination to participate in professional development (McQuiggan, 2012). At the core, these experiences can affect the epistemic, sociocultural, and psychic assumptions of the individual, and as a result, impact the individual's response to new experiences (Mezirow, 1997). Understanding this, these factors may need to be considered when

planning professional development that necessitates a shift in the individual's assumptions and beliefs about teaching and learning (McQuiggan, 2012). Not only do faculty perceive their institution more positively when the institution values online teaching (Bollinger & Wasilik, 2009), but providing effective supports, strategies, and motivation to help faculty make the necessary, intended transition is an important consideration for sustainable faculty change (Marek, 2009, McQuiggan, 2012).

Isopahkala-Bouret (2008) analyzed the reflections of six employees in an international technology company who were leaving positions as technology specialists and moving into positions with managerial responsibilities. These established professionals had made other transitions, both occupationally and organizationally, so that for the new position "the focus of learning is not so much on how to practically orient in a new job, but on how to re-position self in a familiar context and to re-establish social relations" (Isophkala-Bouret, 2008, p. 70). As they questioned, probed, and learned in their new roles, the new managers' assumptions and habits were challenged. Isophkala-Bouret's (2008) notes that the process of transition into a new role was "self-transforming;" while they did reflect on their new roles, by "comparing 'self' to the role expectations one was also learning social norms, values and leadership ideals" (p.81). The new manager's' perspectives did shift based on their previous experiences and understandings about managerial roles, but also " in terms of adaptation to the prevailing discourse that defines how the managerial roles are properly enacted in a certain context" (Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008, p. 81). Isopahkala-Bouret (2008) suggests that while the transition into a new role created a shift in perspective, that shift may have been due to adopting the prevailing perspective.

The corporate setting in which the study took place created conditions for the individual transformation to be defined by the values, culture, and priorities of the organization and led to the new managers acquiring a new perspective, the perspective of the organization (Isophkala-Bouret, 2008). The idea that can be drawn from this study is that the context and setting may be a significant factor in transformation. There appears to be little literature on transformation that occurs with higher education online faculty who already teach online as they participate in mandatory professional development in an online setting. The findings identified by Isophkala-Bouret (2008) will add to this research and may provide insight because the experiences of online faculty who are remaining in the same basic role, teaching the exact same course, are challenged to see their online teaching practice from a new perspective.

Taking risks, discourse, and critical reflection are elements that have been identified to provide the foundation for transformative learning to occur (Mezirow, 1991). When adults are mandated to participate in a faculty development series that is conducted online and are in a group setting with other professionals who they may not know, it may be difficult for some of the group members to take risks. Risks in this type of setting may include, attempting to learn to use a new technology, identifying their own deficiencies related to teaching online, discussing prior experiences, or reflecting publically on the learning process. The new group members may not trust each other enough to come to common understandings, but trusting relationships can be developed through open dialog and sharing (Fairholm, 2001; Henderson, 2010; Smith 2012; Taylor & Snyder, 2012).

To promote the transformative learning process in online environments Smith

(2012) recommends that three "pedagogical considerations" be included in the online course design:

- using a learner-centered approach
- accessing higher order thinking through expanded discussion with peers
- increasing opportunities for self-reflection (Smith, 2012)

The elements highlighted by Smith (2012) for effective transformative learning in online higher education courses may also be important for faculty development as it occurs in an online setting.

Traditional or conventional learning involves the teacher as the disseminator of information and the learner as the recipient of that information. Traditional learning is often associated with lecture-type teaching and student note-taking (Blumberg, 2008). A learner-centered approach to teaching shifts the focus from the teaching to student learning and the process of learning (Attard, Di Iorio, Geven, & Santa, 2010; Blumberg, 2008; Smith, 2012). Creating multiple opportunities for interaction with peers, engagement with the content and the instructor, and opportunities for higher-order thinking and self-reflection are considered learner-centered approaches and also are best practices for adult learners participating in professional development (Baran & Correia, 2014; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012).

One way in which higher order thinking can be facilitated in an online setting is through discussion with peers in the discussion board feature of a learning management system. Posing questions that require learners to predict, analyze, synthesize, debate, or support content or other learners' discussion posts can increase higher order thinking (Rovai, 2007) as can providing authentic problem-based and collaborative projects. These

elements are effective teaching strategies for any learning format, but must be intentionally designed for online learning. The challenge to think and the requirement for learners to critically reflect when participating in this type of design, also promotes transformative learning, and can be used as a foundation for professional development for faculty and administrators (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012).

The requirement to improve learning by using emerging instructional and communication technologies can create demands on higher education faculty members and challenge their thinking (Schols, 2012). To illustrate this point, data from a qualitative study of faculty from The Netherlands' Teachers College Tilburg, Fontys University of Applied Sciences suggests that the challenge to use information and communication technologies in their own practice required the faculty to examine and reflect on their own perspectives about the profession as well as on their roles as educators (Schols, 2012). The faculty members, who participated in a skills-based workshop to learn to use new information and communication technologies to improve interaction in their online courses, were interviewed in focus groups. In that forum, the faculty participants had the opportunity to discuss, and made visible, their personal assumptions and beliefs about the use of technology as it relates to their own practice. In sum, they described that the workshop expanded and changed their roles as educators. The discussion and reflective thinking about their experience with learning new technologies helped to transform their perspectives on the potential use of technologies for teaching and learning (Schols, 2012).

Schols (2012) reports that as a result of the workshops, the faculty gained knowledge and proficiency with new technologies and "were able to revise their beliefs

and assumptions with regard to their perspective about their profession or their views related to technology in education" (p. 47). It can be argued that the faculty workshop participants experienced several stages of transformation: they were initially challenged and disoriented when presented with an the potential use of emerging technologies, they critically reflected on and discussed their own experiences and perspectives, and with their revised perspectives, put their new skills and knowledge into action (Mezirow, 1997; Henderson, 2010). These faculty participants may have had a transformational experience that shifted their thinking about teaching and learning with technology (Schols, 2012). Schols (2012) suggests that while becoming skillful with the technology is important, the main focus should be on the human element - how to help educators think critically about alternatives to their teaching. To make faculty learning sustainable, professional development needs readjustment in both structure and content to allow for transformative learning experiences (Schols, 2012).

Summary

Organizational change in higher education is highly dependent on faculty change. When the organization determines that a transformational change needs to occur, such as a change in the way online courses are designed and delivered, faculty are required to change the way they have traditionally provided their courses to students. Many institutions offer professional development to faculty, but the outcome of the efforts is not always clear. This study addresses how faculty accept, react to, and implement the expectations from professional development.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature that guides this study. This study will explore the experiences of online faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online. The researcher will attempt to understand the experiences of

five faculty participants as they relate to transformative learning and organizational change.

Chapter 3

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences of higher education online faculty who have participated in mandated professional development. As an extension, this study seeks to make visible the individual transformative learning experiences resulting from professional development that lead to sustained change in online teaching.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, the qualitative research design, and the methods used to collect and analyze data for this study. While semi-structured interviews were the primary data source, a review of course artifacts provided support for the impact of the professional development and surveys provided descriptive and inferential statistics. A description of the site is provided along with the data collection plan and timeline. The ethical considerations regarding confidentiality for the site and the population who have participated in this study are presented.

Research Design and Rationale

A qualitative research paradigm offers the researcher an opportunity to capture the details and depth of the unique experiences of the participants of mandated professional development to teach online. The qualitative design of this study offers a chance to understand the ways in which participants are able to make meaning in the context of the event (Merriam, 2009). Multiple, individual cases were developed because as Yin (2005) suggests, when the researcher is seeking a general understanding of the phenomenon, adding a second case may offer stronger support for the findings.

An exploratory qualitative approach was used to address the following overarching questions:

1. What are the experiences of online teaching faculty participating in mandatory professional development programming to teach online?
2. How has mandatory professional development impacted online faculty course design and delivery?
3. What specific elements or experiences during mandatory online professional development program had the greatest impact on faculty acceptance of the required change?

The answers to these questions can provide guidance to higher education institutions that are trying to meet the growing demand for excellence in online education. This research presents a particular focus on how a group of faculty accepts, reacts to, and implements the expectations from mandated professional development.

Qualitative research is appropriate for a research problem in which little is known and an in-depth understanding of the central phenomenon is required (Creswell, 2012). A multiple case study is particularly well suited for this study because individual cases can be used to provide a detailed understanding of an issue (Creswell, Hanson, Clark, & Morales, 2007). The aim of a multiple case study is to "see processes and outcomes across many cases, to understand how they are qualified by local conditions, and thus to develop more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanation" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). Data collected and compared between and within multiple cases can improve insight into the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2005). This multiple case study specifically focuses on understanding the lived

experiences and unique assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions that inform how the faculty who participated in mandatory professional development learn and teach.

Qualitative data was collected through interviews, a review of online course artifacts, and survey data. Interviews were conducted with faculty who participated in the mandatory professional development activities. In-depth interviews provide essential information regarding faculty perceptions and opinions of events and experiences (Yin, 2009). The review of courses is a component of the Graduate School of Education's effort to determine the effectiveness of the mandated professional development workshop series. Artifacts include a variety of "things or objects in the environment differentiated from documents that represent some form of communication" (Merriam, 2009, p. 139) and represent part of the "story of an individual's experiences" (Creswell, 2012, p. 515). A review of online course artifacts offers tangible support for the impact of the professional development activities (Creswell, 2012). Survey results provide alternative insights into the interview findings (Hess-Bieber, 2010; Romm, 2013) and provide demographic data, from which a deeper understanding of the faculty participants can be drawn. This multilayered approach may further the discussion of how to develop and offer professional development programming related to teaching online courses to higher education faculty when the initiative is mandated.

Site and Population

The selection of the site and population are based on the necessity to gather the most information about the phenomenon of interest: Experiences of faculty as they participate in mandated professional development. The researcher conducted the study at the college at which she works because, at that college, current faculty are required to

participate in professional development to teach online. Further, the faculty who are mandated to attend, are not necessarily new to online teaching, rather, many have been teaching online for several years. Purposeful sampling was employed because the researcher seeks information and understanding about a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009). Purposeful sampling was used to select the site for the proposed study because the criteria for selection is directly related to the study and will allow for access to information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009). In this study, participants were selected based on their connection to the Graduate School of Education and their participation in the mandated professional development initiative. Maximum variation sampling was used to identify the five study participants who took part in interviews. (Merriam, 2009). Maximal sampling is used to gather the perspectives and capture the shared experiences from a diverse variety of participants bounded by the condition of participating in mandated professional development (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2005). For this study, five faculty participants were selected. To understand the experiences of the diverse group of the faculty, the selection of these participants was based on the impact the professional development had on the design and delivery of their courses. Some of the faculty participants implemented several innovations after the mandatory professional development and others made no changes. The five participants are reflective of the larger group of faculty. To further a more holistic, integrated understanding of the experiences of the faculty participants and to add depth to details of the case, purposeful sampling was also used to gather survey and artifact data (Miller & Alvarado, 2005).

Population Description

This multiple case study focuses on the experiences of higher education faculty who have participated in mandated professional development activities. The participants were selected based on their connection to the Graduate School of Education and their participation in the mandated professional development. Fifty Graduate School of Education faculty members took part in mandated online professional development activities over the course of two semesters. The faculty, full-time and adjunct, consists of 68% female and 32% male members. Fifty-one percent of the faculty members hold doctorate degrees, and their ages range from 35 to over 65 years old. All of the faculty members have taught online for between three and ten years at the institution under study. The faculty who participated in the study have also participated in mandated professional development workshops to improve the design and delivery of online courses. At the conclusion of the workshops, the faculty were sent an email inviting them to volunteer to participate in the study. Confidentiality was guaranteed.

Site Description

The site is a large, urban, private college in the eastern United States. The college serves more than 18,000 students in their undergraduate and graduate programs and in their professional schools. The main campus and several branch campuses are located in the metropolitan area. Most courses and programs throughout the college are offered in a face-to-face setting, but they maintain a rapidly expanding online program as well. One academic department, the Graduate School of Education, offers online courses and programs in the concentration areas of teacher education and school leadership. The online graduate education program provides online courses to about 500 graduate teacher

candidates and school leadership candidates combined. Approximately 85% of the candidates take coursework in the teacher education program, and the remaining 15% are candidates in the school leadership program. This study's focus is on the Graduate School of Education's new mandated professional development program for online faculty. Permission to conduct research at the college was obtained from the appropriate individuals in college administration, prior to beginning research.

Site Access

Maxwell (2005) describes "gatekeepers" as those individuals who can facilitate or hinder the proposed study. For my study, I have two levels of gatekeepers: The Dean of the Graduate School of Education and the Institutional Review Board.

The researcher asked and received permission from the Dean of the School of Education to conduct research with faculty. There were no difficulties with this request. Faculty members who participated in the professional development activities were sent an email inviting them to participate in this research study. The email advised them of the conditions of participation in the interview and the risks involved. The names of those who consented were recorded on the consent form along with their confirmation to participate. Individual participants were interviewed through video conferencing technologies. The interviews were recorded and transcribed with the permission of the participant.

Research Methods

Qualitative research facilitates an understanding of how people interpret experiences and construct meaning from them. Merriam (2009) suggests that qualitative research is characterized by four key ideas: a focus on gaining an understanding of the

participants' experiences and how they process and interpret those experiences; the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; an inductive process; and a product that is richly descriptive (p. 14).

Description of Methods

Qualitative research necessitates that the researcher develops an intimate relationship with the data. This involves the ongoing collection of relevant details by allowing the study participants to tell what is personally important to each of them (Charmaz, 2010, p. 186). This multiple case study uses qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2012). The purpose of this research is to develop an understanding of the experiences of the faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online. An additional outcome is to explore if faculty learning was transformative and led to impactful change in teaching practices and attitudes toward online learning.

Data Collection

A case study involves an in-depth exploration of a case or bounded system in its natural context (Yin, 2009). Multiple cases are used to gather and compare (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Extensive data collection generates information to address the research questions under study (Creswell, 2012). The following methods were used to gather data:

- **Interviews:** Interviews can generate rich data for qualitative research and are the primary source of data for this study. The key to receiving good data is asking good questions (Merriam, 2009). Clarity of the questions, word choice, variety of

questions, and a specific purpose for the questions asked can provide quality information for the researcher (Merriam, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five volunteer faculty participants. An interview protocol was developed to ensure that the questions allow participants the flexibility to discuss their experiences in the most natural way and included several questions that had been piloted on other faculty members (Creswell, 2012). Participants were interviewed individually through a web conferencing application. Notes were recorded in writing during interviews, and interview sessions were recorded with an audio recording device (Creswell, 2012). The initial and subsequent clarifying interviews ranged in length from 45-60 minutes, and the dialog was transcribed verbatim immediately after the interview. The interview questions focused on the experiences and attitudes of online faculty who were mandated to participate in a professional development series to teach online. The questions were designed to solicit rich, thick description, and the protocol can be found in Appendix B.

- **Artifacts:** A second set of data were collected through a review of artifacts that were generated as a result of the mandated professional development. As the course management system is used as the primary method of communication between faculty and students, and is the very focus of the professional development change initiative, several elements from within the faculty participants' online courses are included in the data analysis and will help the researcher determine the degree to which online courses have been impacted as a result of the mandated professional development (Bowen, 2009). Each course was

reviewed with the individual faculty participants to determine whether elements from the mandatory faculty development were incorporated. During the interview each participant described the changes made to their courses as a result of the mandatory professional development. All interviews were conducted through a password-protected video conferencing application with screen sharing capabilities. Each faculty participant visually walked the researcher through the changes made in their courses as a result of the professional development. One faculty participant did not make any changes and did not share her computer screen to walkthrough the course.

- **Surveys**: Two questionnaires were distributed to all online faculty (full-time and adjunct) who are in the department and who are required to participate in mandated professional development.
    - ***Needs Assessment***: The *Online Faculty Needs Assessment* survey instrument was adapted with permission, from an existing questionnaire, *Faculty Development Survey,* and was distributed via an electronic survey tool through the college email system (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). Before distribution, the items pertaining to specific resources found at the survey developers' home institution were removed. The needs assessment survey was distributed before the start of the six-session professional development series. The researcher's rationale for including these data in this study is to gather more detail on the demographics of the faculty who were mandated to participate in the development activities. The needs

assessment survey is found in Appendix A. The demographic information is found in Table 4.

- ***Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey***: At the conclusion of the professional development series, a Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey was emailed to all fifty members of the online faculty who took part in the mandated professional development (Appendix C). Quantitative data collection, particularly from questionnaires, is not inconsistent with qualitative methods (Romm, 2013; Yin, 2005) and, in fact, can yield numeric data that can be analyzed "to assess the frequency and magnitudes of trends" (Creswell, 2012, p. 535). It can also serve to provide alternative understandings of the research process and results (Hess-Bieber, 2010; Romm, 2013).

Table 2 lists the research questions, the purpose of each question, the instrument used to collect the data, and the related questions.

Table 2. Research Question in Relation to the Information Needed, Research Method, and Interview Question

Research Question	Purpose (Information Needed)	Instrument and Related Questions
1. What are the experiences of online teaching faculty participating in mandatory professional development programming to teach online?	Participant's perception on whether the mandatory faculty development is a factor in his or her own learning and course improvement.	Interview Q.1, Q.3, Q.5, Q.6, Q.7, Q.8, Q.9, Q.11, Q.13, Q.14 Faculty Satisfaction Survey Q.1, Q.2, Q. 6, Q.7

Table 2 (continued)

2. How has mandatory professional development impacted online faculty course design and delivery?	Specifically, what elements are different in the participants' courses and why? Is the change sustainable?	Interview Q.4, Q.7, Q.8, Q.9, Q.12, Q.15 Faculty Satisfaction Survey Q.1, Q.2, Q.3. Q.4, Q.5, Q7.
3. What specific elements or experiences during mandatory online professional development program had the greatest impact on faculty professional practice?	What factors made the participant feel competent, willing, and able to implement changes?	Interview Q.6, Q.7, Q. 8, Q.10, Q.11, Q.12, Q.15 Faculty Satisfaction Survey Q.3, Q.5, Q7

Data Analysis Procedures

To address the research questions and provide the most trustworthy and verifiable representation of the participants' experiences, the data were analyzed with an appropriate, systematic approach. Yin (2005) proposes that qualitative data be treated to a five-phase cycle: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. Interview data and open-ended survey responses were analyzed using Yin's (2005) approach.

The first step involves close reading of the text and open coding - breaking apart the text and assigning meaning to each part. Coding the data provided for a deep study of the words and events within the data and was applied to identify and explore concepts, causative conditions, context, circumstantial factors, and actions of the individual participant (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Miles & Huberman,1994). The researcher

employed Strauss's (1987) suggestion to look for instances of "conditions" set forth by the data, as well as "interactions between and among actors," "strategies and tactics," and "consequences" but simultaneously considered data that emerged naturally (p. 28).

Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend to analyze data as it is generated. The ongoing process helps to formulate the researchers' perspective, to expose data that needs clarification, and to help reveal potential sources of bias (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following their recommendation, immediately after the interview was concluded, the conversation was transcribed verbatim and the process of data analysis began. Initial codes were assigned based on the conceptual framework, the research questions and from the perceptions that emerged from the voice of the individual participant. The constant comparative procedure was used to develop categories of information gathered from the interviews (Creswell, 2012). Simultaneous coding and analyzing was used to capture and characterize core content and ideas and provided an approach to understand the complexity of the case (Bloomburg & Volpe, 2012; Kolb, 2012; Saldana, 2009; Strauss, 1987).

Each subsequent transcript was coded in the same way as the first, with consideration of the emerging codes, but also with attention to fresh insights and contrasting perspectives (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A unique codebook was created for each faculty participant, listing the code, the meaning of the code and an example of the chunk of text that generated that particular code.

The next step involved questioning, reexamining, reorganizing, recoding, reducing, and connecting the data. Categories and themes emerged from reworking and reorganizing the data as patterns and key information were revealed. While attempting to

frame the codes around the research questions and the conceptual framework, the researcher was conscious not to follow those frameworks so closely as to limit the categories. The analysis of the qualitative interview data was complete when it appeared that the analysis was as comprehensive as possible and no additional codes or categories could emerge (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

- **Interviews:** Multiple cases were selected to gain deeper understanding and explanation of the phenomena under study. Each case is presented through individual vignettes accompanied by quotes from the voices of the participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

  The five cases were analyzed according to the pattern-replication strategy outlined by Yin (1984). Data from each case was studied in depth and presented as a whole study, supported by evidence from multiple data sources. The findings from a second case, and each successive case, were examined to ascertain patterns or instances where the patterns are weak or absent (Miles & Huberman, 1984; Yin, 2012). All transcription and coding was done by hand, and coded data were recorded and organized using tables in Microsoft Word documents.

- **Surveys:** The initial data set from the two surveys was collected from the *Online Faculty Needs Assessmen*t. The data provides demographic information on 39 faculty respondents who participated in mandated professional development. The data were analyzed, first by categorizing and then by identifying patterns as a way to obtain a descriptive picture of the faculty population. That data were subsequently compared to the demographic data of the sample to determine

whether the sample was representative of the larger group. The data are presented in Chapter 4.

The second set of survey data was derived from a satisfaction survey that was distributed to all online faculty who have completed the mandated professional development series. Faculty members were emailed a link to the Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey which contains open- and closed-ended questions related to attitudes and perceptions toward the professional development series and related to their own learning and development (Appendix B). The survey contains five multiple-choice items, seven items rated on a three-point scale, and two open-ended questions. The survey was created in Qualtrics, and the results for each of the closed-ended items were analyzed individually and compared to the data derived from the two open-ended questions, the interview data, and the artifact analysis. The open-ended questions were coded using the constant comparative method. Data obtained from the surveys allows for analysis using descriptive and inferential statistics.

- **Artifacts:** Changes in online courses were verified against a checklist that was based on the content of the mandatory professional development (Yin, 2014). The type of artifact that was generated in each faculty participants' online course is listed in the Findings section in Chapter 4. The integration of these artifacts can provide insights and knowledge about the instructional activities and approaches that have been generated through the faculty experiences.

The findings from the survey responses, interview transcriptions, and artifacts

were analyzed and the intersections of those findings provided a framework for an integrated, holistic understanding of the research topic (Yin, 2011).

Data Collection and Analysis Plan

Data were collected according to Table 3.

Table 3. Data Collection and Analysis Plan

Date	Action
July 2014 – December 2015	Distribution and collection of Needs Assessment,
September 2015 – February 2016	Conduct six mandated professional development activities'. Collect "Reflections and Suggestions"
February 2016 - May 2016	Distribution and analysis of *Faculty Satisfaction Survey* Interviews with five faculty participants Analysis of interview data begins at the conclusion of each interview Artifact review at the conclusion of each interview

Trustworthiness and Study Validation

Merriam (2009) notes that qualitative research is a process where the researcher is positioned as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. Yet, in that role, the researcher can bring unintentional bias to the study because of her relationship to the participants, involvement in the event under study, or her own attitudes and perspectives about any number of things surrounding the research questions. To reduce the potential for bias, the findings from the research process are presented as rich, detailed descriptions with the ultimate goal of exploring and understanding how people interpret experiences and construct meaning from those experiences (Merriam, 2009). The researcher aims to presents the findings as truthfully, honestly, and as with as much rigor as necessary to make a sound representation of the participants' views. In this study, interviews, survey

responses, and artifacts from courses were collected and analyzed. The trustworthiness and the validity of the findings and interpretations of qualitative research can be addressed by meeting four criteria: dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Dependability is addressed by ensuring that the research design, implementation, data collection and analysis are described in detail and followed accordingly (Miles et al., 1994). Dependability of the results and methods provides a way to gauge whether the results of the study represent the realities of the individual participants and are accurate across time and across researchers. The quality of the study is further improved by making the researcher's stance and potential bias transparent (Miles et. al, 1994).

Credibility relates to the accuracy and confidence in the researcher's interpretations of the findings (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The use of multiple data sources and methods, as well as the collection of data generated through multiple informants can build credibility (Shenton, 2004). In this study, interviews were conducted to gain access to first hand experiences and perspectives of faculty who have previously taught online, and who also were mandated to engage in development activities intended to improve online course design and delivery. "Individual viewpoints and experiences can be verified against others" and those individual contributions allow the researcher to construct a detailed understanding of the experiences, attitudes, and behaviors of the study participants (Shenton, 2004, p. 66). After the data from the interviews was transcribed, each participant was provided an opportunity to review their statements for accuracy (Harper and Cole, 2012). This was done to provide an added layer of verification to the participants' perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Additionally,

multiple sources of data were analyzed with a view to find intersections: interviews, surveys, and documents. The combination of finding intersections between multiple data sources coupled with the detailed description gained from those sources enabled the researcher to co-construct the realities of the individual participants, in essence, developing an authentic portrait of the phenomena under study and lending credibility to this research.

Confirmability relates to how conclusions made in this study can be confirmed. A significant element of confirmability involves methods taken to reduce or acknowledge possible researcher bias (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013). While I cannot claim to have a personal distance from the participants or to the event under study, I have made efforts to support my claims by collecting data from multiple sources and gathering perspectives from multiple participants (Miles et. al, 2013). Moreover, during this study, all data was carefully collected and analyzed. Emerging themes were not taken at face value, but instead, as the data was reworked, condensed, compared, and reflected on, alternate and opposing conclusions were considered. Multiple quotes were used to strengthen inferences drawn from the data and to support confirmability (Shenton, 2004). These processes help to ensure a more solid interpretation of the findings as "the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher," adding to the confirmability of the study (Shenton, 2004, p. 72).

Transferability also adds to the trustworthiness of a study. The objective of qualitative research is to learn from inquiry: "what we learn in a particular situation we can transfer or generalize to similar situations subsequently encountered...in everyday

life" (Merriam, 2009, p. 225). The thick, highly detailed description of the data and the context, characteristic of qualitative research, generates dialog and understanding, and can stimulate further research. It allows the reader of the study to make connections, find meaning, and to best determine if the study findings apply to other situations (Merriam, 2009, p. 226).

Ethical Considerations

This study involves interviews with college level faculty. The researcher will seek approval from the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs as an exempt study since the risk to participants is considered to be minimal.

In order to provide for the protection of human subjects, each potential participant will be informed about the purpose and procedures of the study and will be provided with a document outlining several conditions of the study. Participation in the research study:

- is voluntary
- will not affect the participant's professional status
- does not yield any direct benefits to the participants in this research study
- will not cause the participant to incur costs to participate in this research study
- will not cause a penalty to the participant if the participant chooses to withdraw from the study or chooses to decline to answer questions at any time during the study
- will include strict confidentiality maintained by the researcher as described by the Protection of Human Subjects (CITI, 2014)

One potential risk to participants is the loss of privacy. To minimize the risk, all research data will be stored on Drexel's Sharepoint site that is encrypted and password

protected. Pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names, and all data will be coded to reduce the chance of any identifying information being linked to the participant. Information about the site at which the research will be conducted will also be provided a pseudonym and the specific location will be identified only by region. Any surveys distributed will not request identifying information about the respondent in any response field. All data collected will be kept confidential and anonymous and the participants will be assured that none of the information gathered will be made known to their administrators or used to impact their employment.

The researcher completed the Human Subjects Research training before conducting research, and all research will comply with the guidelines presented in the training as well as with the participant's institutional policy for the protection of human subjects**.**

Summary

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, the qualitative research design, and the methods used to collect and analyze data for this study. Information about the site and site access is then presented. A timeline for data collection and the data collection plan are presented. The chapter concludes with strategies the researcher has employed to develop a valid, trustworthy study and an outline of the ethical considerations regarding confidentiality for the site and the population who will participate in this study.

Chapter 4

Findings, Results, and Interpretations

This chapter describes the findings of the multiple case study and the results of the analysis of the interviews, surveys, and artifacts. The interview data are presented as vignettes, and the survey and artifact data are presented quantitatively and descriptively as a vehicle through which to explore the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online. This description of the lived experiences of the faculty participants also provides a means through which to determine the factors that specifically impacted those experiences and their decision to make changes in their practice. To help ensure confidentiality of the participants, only pseudonyms were used to identify the five faculty volunteers. Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of the findings, results, and interpretations.

Findings

The department that was the recipient of the mandated professional development initiative was a School of Education. Fifty-eight online faculty members were sent the survey by email. The demographics of the 32 respondents are found in Table 4. The results of the survey will be presented in the Results and Interpretations section of this chapter.

Table 4. Demographics of survey respondents

Age of survey respondents	***Under 25***	***0***	***0%***
	26-35	***1***	***3.4%***
	36-45	***5***	***17.2%***
	46-55	***4***	***13.8%***
	56-65	***7***	***24.1%***
	Over 65	***12***	***41.4%***
Gender of survey respondents	***F***	***13***	***43.3%***
	M	***17***	***56.7%***
Years teaching in higher education	***Less than 1***	***0***	***0%***
	1-5	***4***	***12.9%***
	6 or more	***27***	***87.1%***
Number of unique online course taught	***1***	***3***	***9.4%***
	2	***5***	***15.6%***
	3 or more	***24***	***75%***

Participant Demographics

Five faculty members who teach online volunteered to participate in this research study. Their involvement included interviews and a review of their courses. The participants ranged from 40 to 72 years old. Two were women and all of the participants had worked in higher education at this institution from between 8 and 12 years. Four of the five have taught more than three unique online courses at the study site. These participants are representative of the larger population of faculty at the study site. Additionally, three of the participants had over 25 years experience in P-12 schools and

two of the five had top-level supervisory jobs in the P-12 districts in which they formerly taught.

Case Description

This multiple case study is bounded by time and place. The institution at which the research is centered has offered online courses for approximately nine years. To teach online, faculty were required to several hands-on workshops that dealt with the basics of Blackboard. The recent mandated faculty development initiative consisted of the implementation of three distinct elements: 1) a universal online syllabus template; 2) the development and deployment of a consistent, structured Blackboard navigation menu, and 3) participation in a mandatory professional development series. To become familiar with those changes, the online faculty were provided the new syllabus template and were required to attend a one-hour webinar that described and demonstrated the template. The other mandatory element was a series of six two-hour online sessions over the course of a semester. To assist faculty with incorporating elements that were introduced in the mandated sessions, optional informal weekly online drop in sessions were scheduled. During one semester, several one-topic targeted 30-minute real time webinars were also made available and were optional.

To begin to understand the experiences of five online faculty members who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online, the voices of the participants have been crafted into the vignettes that follow (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Stan

Stan worked as a K-12 classroom teacher in an urban school system for over 30 years. He has worked as a faculty member in higher education for twelve years. For the

last three years his courses have been fully online.

Teaching online

Stan began using the college's Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard, in a minor way in his onsite courses before he taught online. He didn't know what teaching online would involve but found the process of learning the new system difficult.

> I was ready to quit. I really didn't think I could do it, and then I went for the training and found out how difficult and involved it was, but I learned that you can learn anything if you apply yourself.

He needed help with "setting up the course" describing that the content or teaching the content was not the problem. "…it wasn't that I can't do the other part. Just setting it up it just seemed so complicated."

He met with the Academic Computing team for help to set up his course, asked a lot of questions, and "just tried to keep it as simple as I could." Through hands-on individual help over several semesters of practice in online courses, he began to settle into a pattern of regular grading and felt confident teaching with the basic Blackboard course he had.

His courses were developed, but were very basic and heavily text-based as he recalls: "when I first started it was pretty much what I expected you know, I would give out assignments and students would respond and that's pretty much where it ended."

Mandatory professional development

When he heard that he needed to attend mandatory professional development as a way to advance online teaching and learning, he again thought it was going to be difficult.

> ...even doing the training I thought "I can't do this, I can't do this." It just seemed so complicated and difficult, but I did it and learn.

He commented that upon hearing that online faculty were required to attend professional development to teach online:

> I focused on the word mandatory, you see, you know, mandatory training is ok if they have a list of workshops and you can choose what you want, which I did before they made it mandatory. I don't even know if it was mandatory. I just signed up just because I needed to learn to do these things which was good. When they said it was mandatory it is somebody else's agenda.

He did have experience with mandatory staff development in the K-12 schools and recognizes its value:

> Mandatory is a mixed thing. It is necessary really. When I was in public schools, all the training was mandatory you know, because the people wouldn't go if you didn't make it mandatory.

He felt the same way about the professional development here too, stating, "You know, if they said go to training and it wasn't mandatory, I don't know who would go." He attended the mandatory series, the 20-minute online-targeted tips for online teaching,

> They were good, that wasn't too fast—the 2-hour workshops. There is a lesson, give short workshops. Focus on one topic...maybe have people come who actually need it.

Since he prefers one-on-one help, he did not attend any of the virtual cafe drop-in sessions.

> I like individual people. I'll tell you why, you go to the café and there are other people there, and they may be asking things that don't really interest me or pertain to me, or I won't do it, they asking about their things about their problems. If I go to individual people, I can focus on what I need.

During our conversation, he continued talking generally about the workshops and the drop-in sessions, "When you're in a training like that, like you go too fast, I get lost sometimes and I'd like to go back, but you can't stop everyone." Later, becoming more specific about his experience he explained, "I don't learn that well on a group

thing...here's the thing with training, there are times when I was lost just because that particular thing didn't pertain to me, or you went too fast for me."

He described that the level of skill for the technology that was presented may have been too advanced for him. "Some of the things you were showing was great stuff, but I really needed more basic stuff."

He believes that when the college upgrades the technology, problems ensue,

> Then they changed the templates and all that and we had to spend all that time redoing everything, then they changed Blackboard from 7 to 8 or something, and that gets me nervous when they change things—if it works just leave it alone, but then the upgrades...then also I'm nervous that my computer will break down. And there are times that I can't get on, because everybody is down, apparently Blackboard isn't working and I have to grade papers.

Students' perceptions and difficulties with technology are a concern for him as well:

> And from the students' point of view, some of them don't like it. I had one student tell me he was away from the program on a leave of absence and the program moved online and he comes back and it was all online and he was very negative, not about me, about being online...From the student's point of view some of them don't like online because they don't know how to do it. And there should be better training. I mean, we get all the training, do the students get training?

Prior to the mandated professional development, Stan did not make many changes in his courses, other than updating the content and keeping up with the volume of work.

> Before I did the training I was always trying to make the course better, updating articles or doing different things that didn't involve technology...I really was just trying to get a hold on what I was doing. I wanted to keep it simple, I never wanted to get too fancy, Just doing discussion boards, they were hard enough...I have a lot of interaction with student on Discussion Board and I email back and forth all the time.

Impact of the professional development initiative

Stan made appointments to receive individual help - one of the IT staff worked "to help me put it together" and another helped "with small technical things, and you

helped me put it into the 21st century." He disclosed that his work in a one-to-one setting helped him to "feel more confident."

Stan wants to add more videos to his course and feels that with assistance, he now can consider adding a series of screen recordings of him describing some strategies for engaging in qualitative analysis.

> The parts that interested me were helpful, the parts I didn't lose track of and get lost you know if it got a little technical...it was a little too fast for someone like me. They give a lot steps, do this, do that, do this, do that, you know I like to write them down, how am I going to write them down...if I can't write steps down, to go back to review it, I'm not going to remember. Some things that seem to be so simple have a lot of steps, I can't remember all those things.

While Stan did not learn directly from the actual mandatory part of the professional development, he did get something out of it: He got a taste of what is possible in an online course.

> I'm aware more of things that can be done to make courses better; I didn't know all of that. I just thought, I give an assignment, do grading, a little back and forth. Now I know. I'm not doing all of them, but I know what the potential is, it could be really good, you know.

When I asked Stan if he believed his attitude about online teaching changed as a result of the mandatory professional development, he explained,

> It changed my attitude because I realized that there was a lot more out there and I felt a weakness in the course, as far as that went, so it changed my attitude in wanting to improve and adding more to the course, more technology, making it better.

Stan provides feedback to every student in every class on every assignment, including all discussion boards because he is trying to ensure that his students receive the education that they expect and deserve, regardless of the delivery format. Still, he lacks

the basic technology skills that could make him feel 100% comfortable with managing his online courses.

Aida

Aida has worked at the study site for thirteen years. When her department wanted to offer online courses she volunteered to teach one. In preparation, she took a few hands-on workshops focused on basic Blackboard functions. In the last ten years, her assignment has included both online and onsite courses.

Teaching online

When there was an offer made to faculty to attend workshops to teach online, Aida volunteered to attend and give online courses a chance.

> They were asking and I did volunteer because I just thought, it's going to go very, technology is going to be very fast and popular and I should have a foot in the door and understand. Because I could be stranded if I don't know. I thought there was a future in it. You know what I mean? And I should not restrict myself only to a live class. That would be limiting myself. So, that's why I did it.

Mandatory professional development

When she heard that she needed to attend mandatory professional development to teach online, she was happy because it provided a way for her to become more current in new technologies that are available and ways to use them to teach online.

> Oh, I thought it was great. From my perspective it's very good, because you know what, I might just let it slide otherwise...So you need to keep up with technology, it's always racing ahead.

Thinking globally, she believes that "you need mandatory professional development to give a nudge to people….and if it's not mandatory, people will let it slide. Because we all live in a very fast-paced world. And Americans work like crazy right? Nobody lives in Europe like this. So, we have mandate—a lot of people will put it on priority. That's my take on it."

Challenges for teaching online are largely related to using the technology. She works with the IT team to help her add certain elements to her course, such as videos and describes that developing an online course is a team effort, "Alone I will not be equipped to do the whole thing, you know what I mean?"

Aida attends the weekly optional drop-in virtual cafe sessions regularly. She often comes with questions about a challenge she is experiencing with something within the Blackboard platform. Other times she attends just to listen to her colleagues discuss what they are working on.

> That's why I always depended on the cafe, because there's always a question, every semester there's something new. You know that better than me, right? Because the thing is, it's advancing so much and there's always something new in the upgrade and then they change it again.

Impact of the professional development initiative

Aida found that the biggest change she made as a result of the mandatory professional development initiative was to organize her course better. The new syllabus template and the Blackboard navigation menu helped her organize her course in a more logical and organized way. For example, she liked that the syllabus and navigation was organized and provided a physical framework for her to follow. She described that she organized "the learning outcomes differently" and notes that "instructional goals should be very clear, and instructions should be very clear" and now they are.

In her brick and mortar course, she has previously used Blackboard only as a resource site for her syllabus and course material. This was primarily because she could not answer technical questions when students who are unfamiliar with Blackboard got stuck. With technology she is "never 100%." She worries about technical "glitches," "I'm not a tech expert, but I have to depend on the tech expert for certain

things and they have to be easily accessible for the sake of the students." She now also provides for onsite students to use Blackboard in a more significant way: "I was able to help them put everything online...now my students have no issues submitting on Blackboard. That's a biggie."

Believing that faculty need to model good practice with technology, she observed that the mandatory professional development workshop series helped her gain confidence in her own technology skills and improved her course organization.

> I have the comfort level, so I can transmit the comfort level to them. So, if you have shakiness in yourself, that's what you're going to pass on to the students – a nervousness. If you have the confidence and the comfort, you're going to pass on that. That's a good feeling for them.

It appeared that for Aida, the biggest benefit from the professional development may have been derived from using the mandated syllabus and Blackboard course templates. She indicated that as a result of the mandatory professional development, she organized her course in a more student-friendly format. She described some initial changes that she believed were beneficial and would act as "just an introductory support" for the students. She added "an Orientation video so students know, what to, what's coming in the course, an introduction to the course, and also so students know where to look for what, you know, look for assignments, look for bibliography…that are going to help them". navigate the online course.

She felt strongly that updating employees with new technologies for teaching and learning is important, "you can't be technologically illiterate…especially in Academia." Faculty needs to be updated to help them "catch up on what's changing…and be on par, you know, with their jobs and the requirements of the job." She noted that teaching every semester for several years "I think I know it all, then something new comes up."

Aida believes that the professional development "reflects on the institution too, that their faculty is much better equipped...they're going to make learning easier for their students." Because of the mandatory professional development, she felt more confortable with her online course, more confident about using new technologies, and overall believed it made a positive impact on the institution, and potentially on students.

Adam

For over 25 years Adam worked in K-12 schools in a suburban school district, first as an educator and then administrator. His shift into higher education came when he began work as an adjunct faculty member in an undergraduate program. When he began teaching in a graduate program four years ago, he was asked to teach online.

Teaching online

Adam was not excited to teach online, but felt that he wanted to continue to teach and an online course was his only option.

> I was kind of reluctant. I had started teaching online because I stopped being an in-class teacher and in-class administrator and I wanted to keep teaching and I thought that this would give me the opportunity to do it...I was a little hesitant because I thought that it would be pretty cut and dry. I would give out assignments, they would give it back to me and that would be the end of it.

And that is exactly how Adam's course operated before the mandatory professional development. He adds his general feelings about online education, "It is definitely different. I miss the interplay between the teacher and students that happens in class."

Mandatory professional development

Adam was excited to hear that there would be mandatory professional development.

> I like having an exciting interactive kind of class, I thought, like in person, and I wanted to try to duplicate that as much as possible online. So, when I heard that I

> had to take some courses I said ok, this might be helpful. When I came into this college I took all the workshops...when Blackboard was introduced, again, I took as much as possible about it. So, the idea of finding out a new, new technologies, I was excited about and, uh, I would say about 70% optimistic that it would be helpful.

Although he attended the optional virtual drop-in sessions most weeks, he found that he understood more and could pick up new teaching and learning technologies more quickly than his colleagues. As a result, most of his own learning came from him seeking out help from the IT team, or directly from the workshop/drop-in session facilitators, instead of from other faculty.

> And again there has been great support staff and...so if I do have a problem they're willing to help me because they know that I want to teach the technology being used and it doesn't do the college, the students, or me, the teachers any good if I want to do it, but there isn't anyone to help. There are different levels of learning between my colleagues and myself and so most of the time I feel like I'm ahead of the curve, so I'm actually helping my colleagues maybe a little bit more than they're helping me. I think it's great to have the opportunity to do the course with colleagues, but here, but I had not learned too much from my colleagues in the technology department. It was mostly the IT people or the staff development people who have helped me the most.

I asked Adam how he would feel if he was again mandated to attend professional development. Because he has seen the value of the professional development, plus the faculty's' wide range of skill with technology, he offered,

> I mean, I think anyone teaching the online courses, I think they should have a required course, I mean to use Blackboard proficiently...I'm for it... because it is a new environment for a lot of people to switch over to it. So, I would be for it, again, if the level was at or near my level.

Adam believes that mandated professional development is necessary to increase efficiency.

> I think it's important... I think the less problems there will be for everybody in administration and IT that they don't have to keep getting constant questions that are pretty routine. If the staff development in the beginning was done in a

> thorough way and required of everybody,

Adam passionately described his overall feelings about teaching:

> I enjoy being a teacher and I enjoy teaching, especially staff development and I enjoy showing people new things and learning new information so the online environment just gave me a new opportunity to give my knowledge and to try to help others, other teachers and students become better or more informed in their areas.

Impact of the professional development initiative

Adam was quite active in the virtual cafe drop-ins. He almost always came with questions about something new he was trying, or wanting to demonstrate and discuss a new technology he found that he wanted to try to use in his course. Regarding how the professional development initiative affected his teaching online, Adam explains that he created a more active presence.

> I feel a lot more positive about the experience. Because, as I said in the beginning, when I started I was concerned that I loved the interaction, I loved talking and doing things with the students. I was afraid that that would be completely lost. It is still lost to some extent, but I feel that because of the ability to add videos and some of the other things that there was a little more personality I could express in the class...to me it was great because I was able to, I think, put all of my personality into the class by doing videos, and I think the videos, the personalization was the biggest change for me on the online class that really helped me feel more, a lot happier with the class.

He also provided more opportunities for students to interact with him and with each other. Since beginning the professional development, Adam has weekly office hours via a video conferencing application, he provides interactive content review videos, and provides video introductions to major assignments, video feedback to the entire class, and added more images and videos related to content. Even a simple change was positive.

> For instance, I do have my students put an avatar by putting a picture of themselves, I have my picture up there. So, it is a little more personal than it was in the past with just text in going back and forth. That I really enjoy a lot.

He notes the increased use of technology for teaching and learning in his class has been met "a pretty positive response" by students who are unaccustomed to this type of vibrant environment in an online course. Even more, he believes that engagement leads to learning.

> But I think the more engaged, that automatically makes them learn more. I think also, I think they're more likely, when I a video assignment, I think they're much more likely to listen to the whole thing and hear it, and I think most people, um, absorb more by hearing it then just by reading it...but I think it is more engaging to hear it, to see and hear me talk, than just read something that I put into its place.

Adam is able to learn to use technology quickly. He tries to improve his course by adding more ways for students to access content. As a result of the mandated professional development, Adam's course is rich with multimedia.

Artie

Prior to teaching in higher education, Artie worked for more than 30 years in a large urban school system, first as a K-12 classroom teacher, and later as a district administrator. Artie has worked in higher education for approximately 12 years, the last three involved teaching online.

Teaching online

When he began teaching online he "expected to have a lot of technical issues".

> I've always been a person who's kind of learned on the go. I never really was trained in using technology and I guess with most things I just tried to use my own instincts and insight and not lose my sense of what I see as my role as a teacher versus the platform on which that's expressed.

Learning to use the course management system was a challenge and one of his main concerns was how moving to an online environment would impact his teaching.

> ...it became initially just a very arduous thing about learning how to use Blackboard so you know it's very easy to get caught up in the mechanical aspects of it and at the same time, not surrender the kinds of things you wanted to do.

When he first was going to teach online, he was concerned about keeping the

important aspect of teaching and learning and not getting caught up in the technology.

> Well, look I'm not new to the world of teaching. So I kind of do have a certain cynicism about it. You know it's the old story that a 'change for change's sake' and you wonder if people really understand whether this is really gonna work...I was not happy with it because it put me into a situation where I had a whole learning curve, and again, not so much because I've always approached technology as something that's instinctive. I mean, you know a lot of it is logical sequence and it's more and more as it's developed it's kind of like just follow the 'a to b to c'. It's more trying to make the teaching meaningful and how could I not lose what I was really trying to do which was trying to stimulate the students into learning.

He does experience some challenges related to ensuring that students learn, and explains:

> This could be because of my own approach to teaching, so I could only speak for my own situation, but I work much harder online than I do in face-to-face because every thought I have has to be written and because I think it's so important to provide feedback to the students, not only in depth, but also in immediacy, I'm almost never away from the work.

One difficulty is that there are multiple upgrades to the learning management system

which causes challenges and additional work for the faculty and confusion for students.

> So, that's one of the things I struggled with, for example, is the changing iterations of Blackboard. They constantly change the platforms, so you're kind of a creature to what the changes are, as soon as you've learned one thing they may institute another way of doing it, and they don't as with most change platforms, they don't speak directly to the people who use them so some of them are not particularly comfortable to me as a user.

Multiple changes in the Blackboard platform are difficult and unproductive.

> I mean. Do I want them to eliminate my ability to get x or y, not necessarily to change it to z and p? I have no control over it.

Mandated professional development

He believed that the mandated professional development allowed him the opportunity to meet other faculty who he normally would not have met because they are online.

> I think it was helpful. There's a couple of things about it that I would say are very valuable. One is just interacting, because we had a group of faculty I don't get that opportunity, you know online. One of the big problems is...you don't have this social interaction and I think learning is a very social thing and I think no matter what you supplement the classroom with whether it's Zoom or a video or tapes, it's a very isolated thing. So, I thought it was at least one step towards hearing what my colleagues were saying and it was great to hear knowledgeable people ...offer ideas.

The professional development content was heavily related to using technology — there were demonstrations and examples of the use of a variety of instructional technologies, in and outside of Blackboard. One reason Artie gives for not implementing more of the technology in his online course is that students learning to use the technology can become the objective of the lesson, as opposed to learning the content.

> There's a lag always between learning what to do and then making the doing of it useful, so what I mean by that is, as we go along, there's so many add-ons to using Blackboard such as using video, using media, and all this, and there's a gap between both what I know and how to do it, and secondly, how the students know. So you could very easily get caught up in the mechanics of these things and that kind of causes a disconnect between what you're trying to teach if they're so busy learning how to use it, there's very little time for the content of what it is that you want them to learn, and also kind of coordinating it too, getting the content to fit the platforms on which it's possible to operate.

His feelings about mandated professional development are clear:

> You've had a lifetime of professional development as I've had, your initial feeling is very negative, first because you're a professional and secondly, because most of the professional development I've had in my life has not been particularly relevant or purposeful, nobody asked me what I needed they told me what I needed.

While he did believe that, overall, "the intent turned out to be purposeful," the professional development was not geared to his level of technology use. There were

faculty with distinct levels of technology skill levels in sessions. Also, some of the ideas were not anything he would consider using in his course.

> I think it was hard for the providers to really understand the needs of the audience, which I saw as very disparate - some knew more than others. But how do you target for that population? It's one of, a real challenge in professional development.
> ...and you know, it's very hard so there were times when I found the information very useful and other times when I said I don't need to know this or this is not the way.

Impact of the professional development initiative

The format was not the best for him to sustain what he may have learned. If he did something in one semester, how can he remember how to do it in another semester?

> ...when you have professional development that's over a period of time and some of this stuff is new to you, it's very hard to retain the information. So for example I learned how to use mashups but that was in a moment in time and at that time I knew how to do it. I tried to use it and put it into a course, but I don't know if I remember how to do what I did anymore. So, how do I maintain that learning? He described that he added a video to his course by using a tool called mashups.

He would have liked the students to add a video to the course, but their technology skills may be immature.

> You need to be a person who knows the technical stuff, but also has the experience to understand how to apply it. So, you might be a great technician, but so what, I'm not trying to work for Microsoft, I'm trying to just create a practical classroom environment that needs to work. And let me just say this, let me make that more concrete, so now I have twenty-five students, I may have five of those students who've never used Blackboard before, I'm gonna start talking to them about Mashups? That's the problem I had.

He feels that the practicality of the situation, that is that student's technology skills are also at different levels, prevents him from changing his course.

> ...but now how do I make it work? I have very mixed success with getting the students to do that, to posting pictures, to responding to a blog, you become frustrated, it's hard enough to just do the basic stuff of giving them their assignments, grading them, and doing the stuff that clearly everybody has to do and even then there's problems. some of the students don't have updated versions

> of Microsoft Word...so here, I'm trying to learn how to do it and I'm getting pushback because they're all over the place too. I don't blame the instructors for that, I blame the reality of the world and the practical way we live. I mean we don't all meet in a room and we don't all leave at the same place, we're all over the place and how do you make it work?

Artie's experience with the mandated faculty development is that it was overall too much. He compared it to our own national educational system, "We try to teach everything, we don't do it well, and then that effect is forty percent of the kids come out not learning it at all. So, what good was it all?"

He suggests that the professional development tried to cover too much material too quickly,

> When you're learning something, you've got to really, less is more, than more is less. Because then the other fact is you lose everything. I think there should be two or three things that become the focus of the term, they should be available, they should be repeated, and they should be followed up on. Because what good is learning something if you don't leave with your ability to work on it autonomously? That's what it's all about.

He also feels that if the college hired him, it's because he could do the job. When he is mandated to take professional development, there is an implication that he is doing something wrong.

> I think if you hire me you should assume that I know what I'm doing and if I need to be told then I shouldn't be working for you. Now that doesn't mean that I shouldn't be exposed to new learning things, but assume I had the same curiosity to learn it as I would hope that my students do about things that I teach them. If I find it of value, I'm going to pursue learning it once I know it's out there .

He did not seek additional support from the online drop-in sessions, partly because of the volume of his work. He is serious about his work, student learning and as an educator, how he guides them. He believes that teaching does, and should, take time.

> I'd like to learn about it, but then here's the honest, biggest problem that I have in terms of doing a lot of this stuff. I spend an enormous amount of time just doing

> the basic stuff for my course, if I have twenty students in three courses that's sixty students who send me essays every week and in some instances discussion boards, as well. It takes me hours because I read every single word of everything my students send me, I respond, and I try to do it in a timely fashion so I'm up-to-date by Friday with everybody's work. The amount of time that takes me means I could be on the computer easily for five or six hours a day, now do I wanna after that sit at the computer? It's very hard to say, yes, I will willingly and eagerly do that.

But also, there is something that is more related to the organization. He is unsure if his work is valued and if he is recognized as doing a good job, he questions why he needs to change what he is doing.

> Another realistic thing which is that the expectations they place on the faculty are non-equivalent to the benefits the faculty receives, and very honestly I resist some of that stuff simply because of the way I feel, you know, the way I'm viewed, everybody thinks faculty who work online don't do anything when in fact they do much more if you do it the way it should be, and that should be, you know someone should evaluate if a faculty member is worthy of teaching that way and if the decision is made, then get out of their way and let 'em teach.

He updates his course regularly during and after the semester ends. Because of his attention to it, his course very good condition, as he describes,

> The net effect is the same, so I still take pride that a lot of the advancements, I'll say, or the frills, maybe I wasn't doing it with the bells and whistles, but where it was needed I certainly was doing it all along almost intuitively.

Although he is able to keep his courses running the way he want them to be. He does not appear to have a lot of confidence in his technology skills, describing that they are sufficient

> A lot of it is instinctive so that's good because once you get over the fear of trying stuff, if I delete it it's gone. I'm not sure if when I act on instinct I act on knowledge.

Artie is a life-long learner, but does not believe his learning should be based on what someone else says that he needs.

Amy

Soon after joining the college ten years ago, Amy began teaching online and has been teaching exclusively online for the past seven years. Prior to that, she worked in an urban public school system for several years.

Teaching online

Amy began by recalling that when she began teaching online she had "very little experience." Her exposure to teaching an online course was in her own graduate studies, "it felt a little disorganized, hard to connect" and she initially turned down the opportunity to teach online at the study site. She quickly noticed that teaching in an online environment was not going to be the same as teaching in a brick and mortar setting. It definitely ended up being different and it was clear to me that I couldn't do the same thing I did in my live class."

Interaction in an online course is the most glaring difference from the traditional classroom experience as articulated by Amy, "I thought, the value that I brought to the classroom, I thought was my ability to lead a discussion, to listen, to learn, to comment, to draw things out, and in online teaching it was very difficult to do that. At least initially it felt very difficult to do that. So, and I have to say that, I never feel that I have been able to fully recreate that discussion." A challenge to creating that interaction was that her administrator was "so adamant about not requiring synchronous communication, and because of that there was a limit, there was a real limit, I think to how we could use online education." Speaking about real time meetings, such as those done through video conferencing, we couldn't do what we are doing right now, because we'd both have to be here. So we really couldn't do that." Other than learning to use basic Blackboard

functions, Amy did not attend professional development to teach online, but she taught herself how to create a productive course.

> I did write a few things, articles and things, and did some conference presentations early on, and in doing so I had to back up my assertions, so if I said this is what worked, I had to go through the literature and pull from that. And so, I read a good amount of different pieces here and there on my own, not in a formal way, in more of an informal way, just reading articles and things like that.

She recalls first teaching online and began to compare it to teaching online now, "It seemed like I was kind of out in the wilderness by myself when I started and anything I did was fine, you know, that was kind of the way online...I kind of put my syllabus up, the same one and required the same papers and I was barely on it, it was totally different.

Mandatory professional development

When Amy first heard she needed to participate in mandatory professional development, she had mixed feelings. On one hand, time was an issue, "mostly it was, it was about trying to find out 'how can I fit it in,' not that I didn't want to do it, it was just trying to figure out how I can fit it in...it's really tricky to get that in on top of everything else you have to do." On the other hand, "I really love the idea...of continuing to learn." She believes that some of the ideas about online course design she was exposed to during the professional development would allow "a place to really grow," and offered,

> I do feel that many students though, are invigorated by some of the new things, like the videos, like the, you know, like their ability to really engage in discussions with other, and, and offering venues for them to just talk about things without having to say, "and the textbook says this", you know sometimes that's good, but you know, kind of, both of those things.

There are some challenges she experiences when thinking of changing her online course and she reflectively notes, "my experience is so closely tied to the school I'm teaching at

and what they, their ways of doing things, and so...that's the lens I'm seeing things through."

The Blackboard course template requires that assignments, and access to materials be linked several times, but that alone has become a challenge to making changes in her online course. "because we had that training on how to make a good blackboard course and it was like redundancy, basically, that was the goal, redundancy."

In addition to the volume of grading, overwhelming because of the type of grading we have to do in online teaching. It's so individualized, um, I feel it needs to be, so it's a big job, to do it well, let's say.

She had a few concerns about the content of the mandatory professional development, expressing that "some of those things that we learned about weren't the right, some of them felt really great and some of them felt kind of gimmicky, and so, I really think that what's super important is that we're choosing the right tool in our online courses, to get the right results, and not simply go to it just because it's new."

While she did think that the professional development providers "really tried to group people by novice level and people who have taught for a while," Amy recognized that there "was still an unevenness in online faculty" and observed that "at the end, still we weren't grouped really with the kind of people at, you know, we were at different levels." She reflected that the problem "is mostly a product of just getting it together and just starting. You have to start somewhere." Prior to participating in the professional development series, Amy had already tried, and was actively using some of the tools and techniques that were addressed. For example, for several years she added instructor-made videos to her courses and used Blackboard course tools to provide different way for

students to access content and for assessment. She recalled, "Some people thought that having a video was one of the most amazing technology-kind of thing that could ever happen and couldn't' believe it. I was like "remember when we talked about that three years ago" and he was like "no, no, no, no" I feel like that, that there was a great deal of that too."

Impact of the professional development initiative

Amy voiced her concern that because the professional development did not address the different learning levels, and the facilitators did not know what she is already doing in her course, she did not get as much out of it as she would have liked, "If the institution doesn't do a great job of capturing things over time and having a consistent message, I do think it does make a difference where you are, and when you're coming in. Because I think that I would have really taken the professional development, I would have taken much more out of it, ten years ago, eight years ago."

Since taking the professional development she describes that online teaching is being "taken more seriously at the institution.

> It makes me feel there is some kind of threshold for the kind of work that should be done in online teaching, and that makes me feel a little bit better about what I'm doing. it makes me feel a little bit like people care about what I'm doing and they care about the methods that I'm using and I don't know that I felt that way years ago when I started. It seemed like I was kind of out in the wilderness by myself when I started and anything I did was fine, you know that was kind of the way online...I kind of put my syllabus up, the same one and required the same papers and I was barely on it, it was totally different. So I do think that these changes, I feel that there's a lot of changes here, but I feel like these changes particularly are only gonna make it stronger."

Amy also made it clear that the online teaching and learning needs attention.

> I do hope that as this professional development continues, there's also going to be more scrutiny on the types of things, um, that we're doing as professors, overall, I mean... there's always things I can do to improve myself, I don't mean to not

> lump myself in there. We're all, cause sometimes we don't see it, you know, forest through the trees, we're doing it one way, but maybe we need to do it a different way. Um, so that's what I would say.

Amy is proficient in using technology in her everyday life. When she wanted to try to replicate aspects of teaching and learning from the traditional classroom to the online environment, she tried it without hesitation. Then she wrote about it or published articles about it.

The interviews with the five faculty participants provided detailed personal description and reflection on the experiences related to the mandated professional development. Table 5 highlights the emerging themes from each individual case.

Table 5. Emerging themes from individual case analyses

	Stan	Aida	Adam	Artie	Amy
Variation of faculty requires differentiation faculty development opportunities	X	X	X	X	X
Missing interaction with students	X	X	X	X	X
Possibilities and potential	X	X	X	X	X
Individual help and slow step-by-step support	X				
Visible presence			X		
Positive improvement for organization	X	X	X	X	X
Professional identity	X			X	X
Concern for student learning	X	X	X	X	X

Cross case analysis

Four major themes surfaced during the cross case analysis:

1) the "possibilities" and "potential" for online teaching;

2) variation of faculty requires differentiation of faculty development opportunities;
3) faculty concern for student learning;
4) the notion that mandatory professional development was a positive organizational strategy.

All five of the participants shared the idea that the mandatory professional development exposed them to “possibilities” and showed them the "potential” for what an online course could be. Stan said that he is “more aware of things that can be done to make courses better.” Aida liked that the professional development provided a way for her “to become more current.” Artie described that his experience stimulated him to “think about how I could create a better product,” and Amy, although she did not implement any of the new ideas, found what she heard “intriguing” and “would have really ate it up” when she first began teaching online. Adam incorporated much of what he learned into his online courses.

The six session series that made up the majority of the mandated professional development was offered at a novice and at an advanced level, but according to the faculty interviewed, the levels were not distinct enough. Adam and Amy both indicated that there were individuals in their group who needed to learn more basic skills. Adam observed that he believes that there should be a “required course” for online faculty, and Amy described “an unevenness in online faculty.” Stan reported that he was “not technological” and that he needed “much more basic stuff.” Aida believes that setting up her course is a “group effort” because she is “not a tech expert, but I have to depend on the tech expert for certain things,” such as helping students if there is a technical

problem. "I expected to have a lot of technical issues" is how Artie describes his initiation into online teaching, "I was never really trained in using technology."

A third theme that was common among the individual cases is that requiring faculty development was a positive organizational move. Artie observes that the recent change in leadership "is sending a different message, about the kind of institution they want it to be...then it has to filter down to the practical things — what kind of course you want to teach, how is it going to look, and how is it going to be presented." Adam believes that as more basic technology is incorporated into faculty development to teach online, the administration and the IT team will have fewer questions and problems. This idea is shared by Aida, who advises that the institution benefits when the faculty are "better equipped to handle these online class issues."

Collectively, the participants also expressed the idea that improved student learning is a strong factor in deciding to make changes in the way they already conduct their courses. Artie and Amy expressed the strongest sentiment about this issue. Artie considers, "how do I make the experience more interesting, but at the same time address the demands and quality of what I want?" Amy reflects generally on the integration of technology, "I do think that some of the choices I made, I hope, are trying to get to a deeper level of matching that tool to what that goal is in some way, hopefully." As a result of the professional development, Adam incorporated a variety of multimedia into the design and delivery of his online course. His reasoning for adding those elements is that engagement drives learning. Stan added a requirement for students to create a narrated presentation of an existing assignment because the assignment not only becomes clearer and more interesting for classmates to view, but it also teaches students a new tool

to use in their own teaching practice. Aida predicts that her own comfort with technology will pass on to her students.

Results and Interpretations

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of higher education faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online. In this section, the findings from interview transcripts, survey results, and a review of artifacts from online courses will be considered through the lens of the literature as presented in Chapter 2. Intersections are drawn between the themes generated by the data.

Result One: Variation in faculty and mandated professional development.

Stan felt that when the demonstrations using certain technology were not at his level, he became "lost in cyberspace somewhere." Adam's skill with technology is much more advanced and he describes that he would not mind that mandatory professional development continue, but does not "want to go back into a mass class where they start at the beginning again." Table 6 shows the relative technology skill level as reported by the five faculty participants during interviews.

Table 6. Continuum of technology skill level as reported by participants

Stan	Aida	Artie	Adam	Amy
"not technological"	Needs assistance	Can figure out what he "needs to know"	Relatively advanced "right there on the edge of the curve learning about it."	Advanced

Three of the five participants' reactions were reluctant, bordering on resistance to change. They believed that the agenda for the mandatory professional development did

not consider their respective levels of skill with technology, interests, or that many members of the faculty might need additional targeted support. None of these participants were inclined to make changes based on what the professional development introduced, and, in fact, Amy did not make any changes, and Artie made minimal changes. This finding leads to the assumption outlined by Tagg (2012) that training might provide the best results along with acceptance by a larger number of faculty if it is designed with attention to the needs and interests of those participating in the training. Lane (2007) suggests that the perception of the value and the magnitude of the change is a factor in determining the degree of change. Value is not necessarily that which might be considered the best choice, but instead, Tagg (2012) argues, it can be viewed as that "which we subjectively conceive as a gain or the avoidance of a loss, measured from some reference point or anchor" (p. 9).

Amy and Artie both indicated that the time to learn and implement the new technology might not be worth the time away from the real work of the course and that the innovation might not actually improve the course. Neither of these faculty members attended optional support during the initiative and said that they generally only seek support when they have a technical problem. Stan also believed that the process for providing professional development was less than desirable, but he did follow through on quite a few of the ideas by requesting individual support sessions and making gradual, but impactful changes in his courses. Aida also attended the optional virtual support sessions and received individualized help to organize her course. Other than reorganizing her course, she did not make any substantial changes to the way the course is delivered or designed. Adam took full advantage of the opportunities to grow and change by attending

most of the optional support sessions offered. These led to him introducing many of the new tools and strategies into his courses. This pattern of faculty involvement coincides with Shagrir's (2013) findings regarding patterns of higher education faculty's professional development preferences.

Amy and Artie are most fitting to pattern A, which is described by Shagrir (2013) as little or no involvement with the optional part of the mandatory professional development. Through trial and error, Amy and Artie learned about what worked for them to teach their courses most effectively and efficiently within the constraints of their individual skills with technology. Amy is much more proficient with technology than Artie is, and did learn other tools and techniques on her own.

When beginning to teach online, they both took the college-offered basic Blackboard workshops, which existed as the primary process to learn about online teaching. This type of technical training is not uncommon in many institutions of higher education as noted in the literature from Chapter 2 (Keegnwe & Georgina, 2012; Schmidt et al., 2013, Storandt et al., 2012, Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008).

The resistance exhibited by Artie was expressed by his belief that he "was hired to do a job" based on what he has previously done, his credentials, and his past achievements. Teaching is his main priority, he is good at it, and he cited successful student outcomes and student evaluations as evidence: "I always get feedback from my students and my feedback is generally very positive. And, so, if it ain't broke, why fix it?" Knowledge of teaching and of the learning management system are all that are needed. He and Amy believe the faculty development initiative is important, but not necessarily for them. Amy stated that she does not have the time to implement any

changes and that the tools were just not right for her. Particularly regarding using incorporating new technologies, she decided that she would “not simply go to it just because it’s new.” These faculty members have weighed the gains and losses related to introducing a new method or tool into their courses but have determined that they are not inclined to take a loss (Heifetz & Linsky, 2008; Le Fevre, 2014).

Aida and Stan fall closer to pattern B: “frequent involvement: accompanied by support and guidance.” These faculty members are not entirely self-directed toward what they need to learn and know, as they are dependent on the support and guidance of others. Aida and Stan join in willingly and continue to seek and accept support. They want to improve their practice, enhance the student experience, and streamline their workload, but they are not sure what the options to do so may be, or in this case, that there even were options. Stan reinforced that point by noting that, “Some things I don’t know I need until I see the workshop.” Shagrir (2013) suggests that those who fit in pattern B are “in need of acceptance, empowerment, and recognition of their abilities and of direction in selecting and advancing the topic of their endeavor” and do best if someone else directs those needs (p. 61). Caffarella and Zinn (1999) likewise suggest that the lack of support of colleagues and work-related interaction can impede professional development activities.

Adam leans toward pattern C, “regular in-depth involvement with professional development.” (Shagrir, 2013, p. 62). Adam used words like "positive,” “loved,” “great,” and “optimistic” to describe his expectations of the mandatory professional development and the experience itself. Those falling into this professional development pattern seek innovation and direct their own development toward improving their practice, are open to

change, and describe their activities with words that express "pleasure, growth, satisfaction, and love." (p. 63). Table 7 depicts the pattern of involvement at the college as reported by each participant, before and after the professional development (PD) activities occurred.

Table 7. Pattern of professional development continuum as reported by participants

	Pattern A	Pattern B	Pattern C
	Little or no involvement/Only when needed	Involved, needs direction and guidance	Self-directed
Before PD	Artie	Aida Stan Adam	Amy
After PD	Amy Artie	Aida Stan	Adam

As suggested by Shagrir (2013), the patterns were found to be contingent on the following factors:

> their worldview regarding professional development; the motivations for their own development; the objectives they strive to achieve through professional development; the channels of development through which they operate; the amount of time, effort and persistence they devote to their professional development; and what they have achieved thanks to their professional development (p. 58).

Three of the five also noticed that the faculty development initiative was a top-down decision and design. They believed that the professional development would have been more productive and more engaging if they had been part of the planning. Decisions made without input from faculty who are participating in the actual activity, can lead to resistance and resentment (Fullan, 2011; Griffith-Cooper & King, 2007; Heifetz & Linsky, 2008).

Result Two: Mandated professional development signals positive change.

Heifetz and associates (2009) and Henderson (2010) maintain that transformative organizational change cannot occur unless those who are involved in implementing the change are committed to replacing the old habits, beliefs, and assumptions with the new. In all five cases, the participants believed that students were, or would be, positively affected by mandated professional development to teach online. The participants described that students in their courses were already learning and learning well. They based their assumptions partly on course evaluations that indicated that students perceive that they were learning and were "very satisfied" with their courses. After years of tweaking to provide students with the best possible learning experience, with their previous knowledge of online course design, some of the courses were pretty much the way the faculty wanted them to be as far as eliciting the most learning from the students. This was described by one participant, "so that's created a real challenge for me to finding both links to things and uploading relevant readings to try to keep things current. I'm very mindful of that, so there's never an experience where I don't have to go into my course shell and constantly review every single week's assignment to see if the stuff is current, see if there're any changes." Another identified her ongoing goal, "what I've really tried to isolate for my students is the places where their opinion is important and valued, and the places where being very faithful to the text and what it's saying and backing it up is valued, because I do think that that is something that trips them up on tests and other things, currently, and that's something that I think our teachers are really struggling with. So for me, that's something, that's been, I've heard, and I really wanted to implement."

Even so, the participants still felt that their online courses had "a weakness" and that online courses still "could be different." The difference they described mainly centered on the lack of interaction and visual contact that was a natural part of their onground teaching experiences, but was missing from the online environment. This significant and undesirable lack of interaction in online courses is reported in multiple research studies (Blumberg, 2008; Freitas & Gold, 2015; Kemp & Grieve, 2014; Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006; Taylor & McQuiggan, Vai & Sosulski, 2011).

Even though the faculty recognized that something was missing from the online experience, some of them were reluctant to attend the faculty development, and after the series concluded, some made few changes, and one participant made no changes at all. Reluctance to integrate technology or to try new online teaching strategies may appear to be resistance on the part of the faculty (Tagg, 2012). This is not uncommon in faculty who teach online or onground courses (Mitchell et al., 2015). Fein & Logan (2003) report that faculty may resist the necessary adaptations to the new environment if they are lacking the skills or knowledge related to how to make the change. Faculty interviewed for this study confirm this idea by noting that the leap into online teaching is a fundamental change from traditional classroom teaching. In fact, regardless of teaching or educational background, teaching online requires acquiring knowledge of new technologies as well as familiarity with best practices for online teaching and learning (Meyer, 2012).

Lane (2002) positing that individuals facing change may feel anxiety over the loss they will experience and over what the future may hold (Mitchell et al., 2015). This leads to the notion that resistance to change may be caused less by faculty personal attributes,

but instead it is created by changing the rules in the middle of the game (Tagg, 2012). That is, by introducing a new way to do something that is already in place, which has been tested by the practitioner, and verified to work reliably with predictable consequences, instructor autonomy and professional identity is threatened. This is supported by Lane (2002) who suggests that in academia, autonomy and independence are anchors for faculty.

Because of the nature of higher education, the faculty have traditionally been self-reliant. Even more, other than positive feedback from students for a job well done, faculty have had little external reward for their efforts. Even student feedback could be a questionable measurement of excellence as noted by a few of the faculty. One described that student reacted negatively to being in an online course "he was very negative, not about me, about the online course" and another considered,

> I'm beginning to wonder, you know, if you make students work very hard there are very few who are going to say I really loved the professor and that's the problem because one aspect of the online experience is that the students evaluate you. Now, what are they evaluating you on? Very often it's going to be the work that's demanded and the grade they receive, so where's the line between having high expectations and then being judged as being an outstanding professor. And I'm not saying it from an ego perspective, I'm saying it from, you know, the learning and teaching perspective because you also want them to walk out feeling it was a good experience, they learn more. And there are very few people who can rise above the grain.

Resistance, then is deeply rooted because, in this case, it might be caused by

- fear of poor outcomes (reduction in student learning or negative evaluations, more work on top of responding to and grading of written work)
- fear of the unknown (trying a new strategy or tool, that fails, or needing to answer student questions about the technology that the faculty member may not be equipped to answer)
- fault with the process as designed by the administration (inattention to "variability" of faculty, i.e., individual interests and digital fluency) (Dubrin & Ireland, 1993)

Conversely, Rogers (2003) asserts that what may be perceived as resistance may be that the individual's perception that the disadvantages of adopting a new technology or practice outweighs the benefits. Alternatively, the individual simply may not have completed the decision-making process of whether to embrace the innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Result Three: Possibilities and potential lead to transformative learning.

Transformative learning is a process that typically involves four phases:

1. A disorienting dilemma: an individual is faced with a challenge to their long held beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors
2. Critical reflection: the individual examines and critically reflects on how their perspectives and assumptions were influenced by those beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors — it opens the individual
3. Discourse — typically through discourse with others, as the individual continues to questions and evaluates a new perspective emerges

4. A shift in perspective is realized and accompanied by a shift in beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors (Henderson, 2002; Mezirow, 1994, 2000).

Transformative learning is a process of transition and growth (Henderson, 2002; Mezirow, 1994; 2000). For the typical college faculty member, transitioning from traditional classroom teaching to teaching online often requires an adjustment in their established concept of teaching and learning and ideas about conventional teacher-learner relationships and roles (Baran et al., 2011; McQuiggan, 2012). Schols (2012) describes a problem that educators in higher education who attend professional development involving new technologies confront, that is "the use of technology in the classroom does not immediately result in innovative educational practices" and learning the technology can be a "complex process" (p. 42). Regardless of the level of digital fluency or the attitude of the individual faculty member toward the initiative, all of the faculty noted that exposure to innovations allowed them to envision new possibilities and potential for their online teaching practice. Stan plainly summarizes his perception of how professional development opened up the possibilities and potential for his online practice by explaining, "Some things I don't know I need until I see the workshop." Conceivably, they were all faced with a dilemma that required each of them to confront their core ideas about their practice in the online environment (Henderson, 2010; Schols, 2012). In agreement with Taylor and Cranton (2012), the novel situation the participants faced in the faculty development challenged them to move beyond their comfort zone, beyond what they know about themselves, their abilities, and about others who teach online.

Stan's impression of teaching online began with, "People who know I teach online say, 'Do you give lectures? How do you give lectures?' I say, 'I don't, I grade

papers.'" He then questions, "Can you have a real online course without lectures? I don't know." Even though he has low digital fluency, with assistance he changed his course significantly. For example, he enhanced his online course with more interactive features and activities. He described that in addition to what he has added to this point, he wants to add video lectures to assist his students understand a process that they largely learned from texts and from his own written notes. Another example is that Adam had an "aha" moment about his online practice when he saw a demonstration of an interactive web-based presentation tool. He was very excited and anxious to use it for teaching and allow the students to use it to present their work. They each came to a new understanding of what was possible for them and for the students in their courses.

Three of the participants took action by seeking additional support to make changes in their courses, and all three have indicated that they want to learn additional online teaching strategies and tools, they will continue to seek help, and they would like to make further changes in their courses. These faculty experienced a change in perspective about online teaching and about their own abilities to create changes in their courses (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Mezirow, 1991). This finding is supported by Cranton and Lin (2005) who suggest that higher education faculty who are faced with using new technologies experience a challenge to their viewpoints, or habits of mind, about their teaching practice. This challenge required them to critically reflect, which led to a new perspective. Schon (1983) proposes that when in a new situation, the individual reflects on the situation and on prior understandings. The individual tries a new "experiment" by taking action. Being part of the experiment leads to a more evolved understanding and ultimately to a change (p. 68). Table 8 describes the impact the

mandatory professional development had on faculty participants' perception of online teaching.

Table 8. Impact of professional development on faculty perceptions about teaching online

Participant	Impact
Stan	• Increased confidence with using technology, • More ideas for online course design and delivery • Greater satisfaction with online courses
Aida	• Increased confidence with using technology • More ideas for online course design and delivery • Greater satisfaction with online courses
Artie	• More ideas for course design and delivery
Adam	• Increased confidence with using technology • More ideas for online course design and delivery • Greater satisfaction with online courses • Actively seeks new educational technologies
Amy	• More ideas for course design and delivery

Schols (2012) describes a problem that educators in higher education who attend professional development involving new technologies come up against. "The use of technology in the classroom does not immediately result in innovative educational practices" and learning the technology can be a "complex process" for faculty (p. 42). To begin to integrate new strategies and new technologies into practice, educators need to first examine and renegotiate personal and traditional educational concepts that currently exist (Schols, 2012). The process of confronting personal beliefs, testing them against lived experiences, and then acting on "new and revised interpretations of the meaning of an experience in the world" is the basis for transformative learning (Taylor, 2008, p. 5). The new professional development initiative provides a series of mandated workshops as well as a weekly online voluntary meeting schedule for faculty to obtain extra help if

needed. These adult learners have wide experience from which to draw their interpretations and expectations and from which to develop understanding (Taylor, 2008). As educators learn and try to use the new technology effectively, they "engage in critical reflective practice and consider new views" about teaching and learning (Schols, 2014). These faculty members experienced a change in perspective that allowed them to take action.

The other two participants also recognized new possibilities and potential for their online course. One participant, Artie, made minimal changes to his course. Yet, these "actions" did not appear to result from a deep change as described in the literature.

However, this participant indicated in a follow-up interview that he would like to try something new in his course. The starting point for the transformative learning process is different for each individual and it is likely that no single event or relationship can be pinpointed as the cause of the transformative change (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012). In fact, transformative change may occur well after this study concludes.

Result Four: Mandated professional development creates impact.

According to the findings, the impact on the courses, on the faculty, professionally and personally, on the organization, and potentially on the students is highly interdependent.

Kagima and Hausafus (2000) suggest that faculty who have been successful in using one technology have a greater inclination to try to use additional technologies. This finding coincides with the evidence presented in Table 10 that lists changes in online courses that can be attributed to the mandated professional development. The review of artifacts and the interview data revealed that when two of the participants, Stan and

Adam, tried an innovation and found success, they felt empowered to integrate other technologies for both the delivery of content and as a way to increase student interaction. Stan is less tech-savvy than Adam, but included six new innovations into his courses and Adam included seven. Table 9 shows the results of the review of course artifacts that were generated through participation in mandatory professional development. These artifacts were in agreement with interview data.

Table 9. Changes in online courses as generated by mandatory professional development determined through a review of course artifacts and interviews

Participant	Changes in course
Stan	• Introductory orientation video • Group discussion board • Student presentation using VoiceThread • Additional course resources added • Embedded librarian • Wikis as sign up sheets and used in a meet and greet activity
Aida	• Introductory orientation video • Improved course structure • Enhanced course design • Embedded librarian
Artie	• Introductory orientation video • Added resource videos through mashup tool.
Adam	• Video lectures • Video feedback • Student-created video presentations • VoiceThread for lecture presentation • VoiceThread for student presentations • Wikis as sign up sheets and used in "getting to know you" activity • Annotated videos • Embedded librarian
Amy	• No changes

Faculty participants argued that technology by itself is useless, as a lot of it can be "gimmicky," or "bells and whistles." Because of that, it should be used only as a way to support meaningful student learning. This feeling coincides with Keengwe & Georgina's (2011) supposition that "technology alone does nothing to enhance pedagogy: successful integration is all about the ways in which technology tools are used and integrated into the teaching and learning process to enhance meaningful student learning" (p. 368).

One participant describes that when the college invests in professional development, "I think it makes you feel more professional, it makes you feel like what you do is valued and important" and that feeling is projected into teaching. Another faculty member suggests, that the confidence and comfort she gained by learning more about technology for online education transfers to the students, and the result is that they are more comfortable using technology. This finding mirrors what was found by Johnson and associates (2015) that faculty with low digital fluency are particularly challenged by technology. Schols (2012) goes further by contending that discomfort is what is needed to change the way faculty design and deliver their courses. Study participants recognized that something was missing from their online courses, but until they knew that there were alternatives for what they could include in their course design, they were frozen in place, doing the same basic thing, semester after semester. As noted in the literature, when online faculty are faced with new ideas about teaching, they also experience challenges to their professional identities and habits of mind that are the foundation for instructional practice. This creates conditions for critical and deep reflection on existing beliefs and practices (Cranton & Lin, 2005; Henderson & Brady, 2008). Critical reflection is an essential transitional element to advance transformative learning (Mezirow, 1978; 1994).

In alignment with Schols (2012), some of the faculty interviewed described that the professional development offerings expanded and changed their roles as educators. This is in agreement with Brock (2010) who found that when an individual examines their current roles and experiments with new roles, as faculty did a s they participated in mandated professional development, they open the door for transformative learning to take place. Table 10 shows the impact of the professional development on the organization as perceived by the study participants.

Table 10. Participants' perceived impact of professional development on organization

Participant	Perceived impact
Stan	• Improving teaching may improve student learning • Students can incorporate technology in their own courses
Aida	• Transfer confidence and comfort with technology to students • Faculty needs to be updated to deliver the course effectively • Students can incorporate technology in their own courses
Artie	• Faculty offering a better course improves the institution • Helpful to hear what others are doing • Interacting with colleagues
Adam	• "Shows that the organization is looking forward to making the online courses as successful and productive as possible" • "will attract more students" • Students can incorporate technology in their own courses • Students who are more engaged may learn more
Amy	• Increases professionalism among faculty • Changes will make institution stronger • Indicates support and value of online courses • Many students are invigorated by some of the new things, like the videos • Students can incorporate technology in their own courses

Through reflection and discourse educators critically examine and challenge their "individual beliefs, assumptions, and values" (Schols, 2012, p. 44). New understandings

are then integrated into existing frames of reference, which causes leads to action (Henderson, 2010; Schols, 2012). The professional development transformed the personal perspectives on the potential use of technologies for teaching and learning.

Results from Faculty Satisfaction Survey.

A Faculty Satisfaction Survey was distributed through email to all online faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online. Thirty-nine responses were collected.

Table 11. Faculty Satisfaction Survey responses related to effective teaching

Question	Yes	Neutral	No
I became more aware of effective online teaching practices after taking the faculty development workshop series.	35	3	1
As a result of the faculty development provided, I will use more effective online teaching practices.	34	4	1

As indicated by the results found in Table 11, after the mandatory professional development, 90% of the respondents are more aware of effective online teaching practices, and 87% of respondents will use more effective online teaching practices. These statistics are in agreement with findings from interview data presented in Table 8, where 100% of the faculty participants indicated that the professional development gave them more ideas for online course design and delivery.

Table 12. Faculty Satisfaction Survey responses related to satisfaction

Question	More	Not more or less	Less
As a result of the faculty development provided, I am _____satisfied with the course(s) I teach.	34	4	0
As a result of the faculty development provided, I believe that students will be _____ satisfied with the course(s) I teach.	35	4	0
As a result of the faculty development provided, I am interested to learn new strategies to teach online.	37	2	0

Results from Table 12 indicate that the mandatory professional development had a positive impact on online courses. Eighty-nine percent of survey respondents believe that they are more satisfied with their courses and 90% believe that students might be more satisfied. Results from interviews are similar, in that 60% of faculty who participated in interviews are more satisfied with their online courses. Sixty percent of the faculty who were interviewed also stated that they have increased confidence when using technology and one of the five, or 20%, describes that he actively seeks new educational technologies to use in his online course (Table 8). These results are supported by statements made by respondents in response to an open-ended question survey question, "Please share your evaluation of the effectiveness of the workshop series."

As outlined in Table 13, one respondent stated that he or she is "now going online to look for extra help with media ideas - YouTube clips especially - and I'm watching watch more demos." Respondents to this open-ended question also believe that the professional development initiative "stimulated my interest in improving my skill and increased my curiosity about the vast potential in this form of teaching," "keeps instructors up-to-date" and "served a very important purpose." These results align with statements made during interviews where 60% indicated that they want to learn

additional online teaching strategies and tools, they will continue to seek help, and they would like to make further changes in their courses.

Table 13. Faculty Satisfaction open-ended response related to effectiveness of the workshop series

The workshop series stimulated my interest in improving my skill and increased my curiosity about the vast potential in this form of teaching.
I believe that the series of workshops served a very important purpose. I have been teaching online for many years and had begun to feel that my courses were not providing enough opportunities for the candidates to connect with me and with each other. I learned strategies to address this. For this reason and others, I believe the series was highly effective.
The workshops provided insight into effectively improving my teaching of online courses.
I found the workshop series to be very helpful. I am now going online to look for extra help with media ideas - YouTube clips especially - and I'm watching watch more demos. Even though I prefer teaching teachers face-to-face I am much more open now to seeing what the online format has to offer.
Keeps instructors up-to-date with the current practices and technology

While these results support other findings from this research, there is a clear and glaring absence of any substantial negative responses. This leads the researcher to believe that it is highly likely that the members of the faculty who had a negative response to the mandatory professional development have not responded to the survey.

Summary

Chapter 4 presents the findings, results, and interpretations. The findings from the primary data source, interview transcripts of five faculty participants are presented through detailed description and direct quotes. The individual cases derived from the interviews were analyzed and reanalyzed individually and across cases. Results from surveys and from a review of artifacts build additional support for the qualitative

findings. Lastly, in Chapter 4, intersections between the findings and the theoretical framework are highlighted and presented.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of higher education faculty who have participated in mandated professional development to teach online. The topic is relevant because as higher education shifts into new models of teaching and learning, faculty are required to keep pace. The multiple case study used narrative data from extensive interviews as well as data from surveys and a review of course artifacts to provide insight into the experiences of five faculty participants. Four main themes emerged from the analysis of the data related to mandated professional development in a higher education setting:

- the "possibilities" and "potential" for online teaching
- the variability of faculty skill and interest level
- faculty concern for student learning
- the notion that mandatory professional development was a positive organizational strategy

Chapter 5 presents conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for future research surrounding this topic.

Conclusions

The goal of the professional development initiative was to bring about change in online courses. Participation in the professional development series was mandatory, but faculty were not specifically required to change anything in their online courses. Initially, there was reluctance and resistance among some of the faculty to attend the professional development and, later, to revise their courses based on their experience in the

development activities. But the evidence from artifacts and interviews shows that some faculty are, in fact, revising and adjusting their courses and online practice. As this is the case, the organization was successful in changing individuals' perceptions, abilities, skill level, and/or knowledge of potentials for online courses.

Henderson (2002) argues that organizational transformation cannot take place without individuals in the organization transforming as well. For the most part, the faculty participants feel that the professional development was worth their time, that they could make changes either with or without support, and that they gained a new understanding of what is possible in online education. The participants have indicated that they now think differently and actively recognize that they could do something unlike anything they have ever done before in their online courses. A few of the faculty participants have taken action to redesign their online courses. This appears to indicate transformative learning on the part of some of the individual participants. As the literature suggests, if the professional development was successful in altering the faculty's deeply held perceptions or attitudes about their online teaching practice, and resulted in action (change in behavior), then the organization has a better chance to undergo its own targeted transformation (Henderson, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009).

Not every participant, however, experienced a change that could potentially be indicative of transformative learning. Some individuals felt that they had no time for changes, did not see the purpose of learning to use a technology to replace what they already do, or were fearful of losing what they have worked so hard to build in their courses. Nevertheless, the different reactions and behaviors, does not mean that the effort was unsuccessful. It may mean that for some individuals the activities provided through

professional development and the associated support did not provide the core elements required for their personal transformation. It may be that transformation will occur later, or possibly will not occur at all.

The research questions and a response based on the findings follows.

1. What are the experiences of online teaching faculty participating in mandatory professional development to teach online?

The experiences of faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online varied. Each faculty member had a unique impression and reaction to the initial directive and to the events. Upon hearing that mandatory professional development to teach online was looming in their near futures, the reactions ranged from excited to resentful. Once the activities began, the first thing the faculty participants noted was that even though the development activities were theoretically provided at both novice and advanced technology skill levels, the groups still included a wide, and unacceptable, range of abilities. Depending on the individual's skill or comfort level, this led each participant to feel that the pace was too fast or slow. Most of the participants also observed that the agenda was not fitting to what they might need or want. As they recognized that their own online courses might be lacking something, they all expressed that there was some value to what the developers offered. A few faculty members also observed that during the development activities, some instructional tools were demonstrated without a clear alignment to how using them would improve student learning. Two of the faculty found that the mandatory professional development was a great motivator to enhance their online courses.

2. How has mandatory professional development impacted online faculty course design and delivery?

In an interview with one faculty member, she acknowledged that she saw a lot of potential for changes in her online course design, but she made no actual changes to her course at all. One of the participants made minimal additions, adding an introductory orientation video and a new way for students to access external links, nothing significantly affecting course design or delivery. One other faculty member made changes that were more related to organizing her course. Conversely, although the level of technical support to add these instructional elements to their courses varied greatly, two of the faculty applied many of the tools and strategies into their courses.

Two of the faculty members seem to have experienced transformative learning. One reported an "aha" moment when he described seeing one technology demonstrated in the context of a course and he immediately saw the potential of using that technology to deliver his own course content as well as how it could be used as an assessment tool. For him, the technology was easy to learn, and from his point of view, encouraged further exploration of additional ways to improve his course design. The other participant struggles with using technology and seeks support for basic tasks. When he was in the midst of the mandatory series, he recognized that a lot of what was described and demonstrated was over his head, but he did take note of a few elements that he felt might engage students and believed that he might be able to incorporate these with assistance from another more tech-savvy person. He subsequently attended individual help sessions and was able to integrate some new ways for students to access information, collaborate with others, and present their work. From that point on, he has been making small

changes in his course and is keeping track of other tools and strategies he would like to try.

Overall, the mandatory professional development has impacted professional practice. This can be determined through the findings from the interviews in conjunction with an examination of the artifact review and survey results. In four out of five of the cases, the individuals indicated that they made positive changes in their courses as a result of the professional development. They had also suggested that they did not know what was possible in online course design and delivery prior to the professional development and it is likely that they would not have made these changes without the exposure to new ideas. The Faculty Satisfaction Survey provides additional support for the impact of the mandatory professional development initiative as 60% of respondents indicated that they are currently more satisfied with their online courses and have increased confidence about using technology. Additionally, 20% responded that they now actively seek new instructional technologies to use in their online courses. The combined review of the examination of the artifacts, the interviews, and the survey results indicate that the college's initiative was generally successful in meeting some of its goals.

3. What specific elements or experiences during a mandatory online professional development program had the greatest impact on faculty professional practice?

Learning about the possibilities for online course design and delivery was universally considered the most important aspect of the professional development initiative. Additionally, three of the five participants believed that making the professional development mandatory was a positive organizational move because it

forced them to participate and gave them a “nudge” to reconsider their online practice. They noted that few might have attended the professional development activities if they weren't mandatory. The responses to their feelings about the actual mandatory activities fell on a broad spectrum of reactions, ranging from “interesting” to feeling that the highlighted innovations were “not the way” to make course improvements.

The primary challenges for the faculty were related to learning to use technology, and having few options for training based on skill level, interest, and level of support. Interestingly, because of their background with professional development in K-12 schools, the faculty did not mind that the professional development was mandated, but would have preferred if it had been more responsive toward their individual needs.

One unexpected result of the professional development series was that one faculty member who was quick to pick up the new tools and strategies took on an informal mentoring role for other faculty who were not as proficient and struggled with learning new technologies. These voluntary actions may have had an additional impact on collegiality and on the confidence level of the faculty member receiving assistance, and also on the faculty member who was providing the informal mentoring. This leads to the idea that professional development may be more impactful if it is provided in a variety of formats, providing for individual preferences. Offering a variety of formats for the professional development as well as single topics from which faculty could choose, would potentially engage the faculty to want to participate and may produce more positive, and sustainable outcomes.

Recommendations

The aim of this research was to explore and to understand the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated professional development to teach online. A second goal was to determine if the process led to impactful change in teaching practices and attitudes toward online learning as a way to potentially create positive, sustainable changes in the organization. Based on the findings, results, and conclusions, several recommendations can be made.

Recommendations for Leaders

When an organization begins a comprehensive change initiative, such as one that targets faculty teaching practice, multiple challenges may surface. For the change to be successful, there is a necessity for faculty to commit to the outcomes; this may require a shift in the individual's currently held, beliefs, assumptions and behaviors (Henderson, 2002; Heifetz et al., 2009). At the study site, the need for mandated faculty professional development was determined and directed by the college administration. Yet, literature suggests that creative and sustainable organizations are built by involving more stakeholders in the planning and development change processes (Senge, Cambron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton, and Kleiner, 2012). The faculty development series was planned without faculty input. This leads to the question of whether the faculty would be more accepting and willing to learn if they were included in the planning. Even more, the faculty participants who were interviewed noted that professional development that is tailored to their interests and technology skill levels might initially have been received more positively.

The findings and the literature indicate that to create a more inclusive and respectful work environment leaders can:

- acknowledge and attend to the variety of faculty perspectives, particularly as it relates to change
- allow for the faculty to share leadership by providing forums for them to voice their opinions
- allow faculty to share leadership by providing opportunities for collaboration with colleagues
- increase communication to bridge the gap between the faculty and the organization's desires and needs
- provide development opportunities to all faculty before teaching online
- provide a safe environment in which to try new tools, strategies, and roles without fear of reprisal
- ensure that development opportunities are based on faculty need and make accommodations for technology skill level when warranted

Recommendations for Instructional Designers and Support Teams

While the faculty development initiative was overall determined to be a positive experience for the faculty, it was designed without the needs or skill level of the faculty in mind. To create the most effective and worthwhile learning opportunities for faculty:

- involve the faculty in the planning and selection of professional development activities (Tagg, 2012)
- differentiate instruction based on faculty self-identified skill level

- provide alternative development opportunities based on faculty interest, especially for those who might need additional assistance developing technology skills
- align presentation of technology tools with specific learning goals
- create opportunities for critical reflection
- create opportunities for discourse and work with colleagues
- provide opportunities to try new tools, strategies, and roles
- find additional ways to reach faculty who may not feel positively about teaching online and providing opportunities for them to participate and learn

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative multiple case study has potentially expanded the understanding about faculty experiences related to mandated professional development to teach online. It has also highlighted some of the challenges that surface when an institution of higher education begins to set the stage for transformational changes in the way online courses are designed and delivered. The findings indicate that faculty recognizes that the institution has goals and objectives, but they also believe that the faculty themselves have the most insight into what they need to support their own learning, and as an extension, the institution's objectives. The biggest question is how higher education can approach professional development to teach online more effectively and with greater impact. The findings suggest that one of the answers to that question lies in the ability of the institution to identify the needs of the faculty. As it is important to merge the organizations' goals and the faculty's needs, particularly when a radical transformational change is targeted by the organization, looking closely, the two are already highly connected. This idea coincides with the literature that describes that sustainable change is

more likely when those responsible for implementing the change participate in the initial planning.

Based on the findings as well as the literature (Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; McQuiggan, 2012; Schols, 2012; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008), the researcher believes that if faculty had been involved in the planning of the design of the professional development agenda, some of the reactions to the professional development may have been more positive. Moreover, it may have become apparent to the planners of the professional development, that to meet the faculty's vast range of capability and confidence with technology, additional individual and small group support was needed.

Faculty-developed and faculty-led professional development activities, peer mentoring (Moss, Teshima, & Leszcz, 2008; Varkey, Jatoi, Williams, Mayer, Ko, Files, Blair, & Hayes, 2012) or peer coaching (Huston, & Weaver, 2008), faculty learning communities (Linder, Post, & Calabrese, 2012; Lock, 2006) and practitioner research groups (Kember, & McKay, 1996) may be some options for the study site to consider.

To extend this study, conditions that lead to transformative learning, primarily critical reflection and discourse, could be added to any professional development for online faculty. Suggested research also involves replicating the study, and including one or more of the following recommendations:

- more closely explore the possible variations in the faculty and their teaching
- require the creation of a specific work product as an outcome
- focus on faculty skills and confidence with using technology during their transition into online teaching
- focus on faculty who intend to teach a hybrid or blended course

- interview the five participants in one year to determine if transformative learning has occurred at a later stage
- explore alternate methods for providing professional development

Summary

This multiple case study offers a window into the experiences of higher education faculty who participated in mandated professional development. This strategic administrative initiative was intended to prepare a foundation for transformational organizational change. Chapter 5 provides answers to the research questions that guided this study. This chapter also presents conclusions based on the intersections of the findings, results, and the literature and offers recommendations for leaders and instructional designers who are considering creating faculty development opportunities to teach online.

Many colleges and universities have offered online courses and programs without a full understanding of how to prepare faculty to most effectively teach online. This was not done intentionally; there simply *was* no foundation from which to base faculty preparation to design online courses. Now as research is exploring best practices in online teaching and learning, institutions may be faced with having to mandate professional development for faculty who are new to online instruction, or have been teaching online without appropriate support. This is a positive realization of the need to properly support and prepare faculty for their online practice and indicates a conscious move toward continuous improvement.

The results and recommendations from this research may provide a guide for institutions as they develop policy related to the design and implementation of

professional development programs, whether the programs are mandatory or voluntary. The findings may also identify strategies that can influence the perceptions and experiences of faculty as they engage in professional development to teach online. Additionally, transformative learning may be found to sustain faculty professional development outcomes, leading to an improved experience for faculty and for students. This supports the transformation of institutions as they strive to remain viable in the online educational environment.

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Appendix A

Online Faculty Needs Assessment Fall 2015

Dear Colleagues,

The goal of this survey is to identify your professional development needs. Your responses will help us to plan faculty development more effectively.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Cordially,

Laurie Bobley

Number

How many unique online courses have you taught, in total, for ABC College or for other institutions? (ex. EDU 611, EDSE 600)

- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3 or more

Resources

Using the rating scale (1=excellent, 2=adequate, 3=poor) please rate how effectively have you been supported in each of the following:

	3	2	1
Access to hardware and software			
Technical computer support			
Technical course development assistance			
Instructional design course development assistance			

Resources

Which of the following resources would be most helpful to support your professional development needs related to teaching online? [check all that apply]

	Yes
Colleagues who have had experience teaching	

	Yes
online	
Instructional designer(s)	○
Technical experts	○
Books/articles related to teaching online	○
Seminars/workshops sponsored by Information Technology Services (ITS)	○
Seminars/workshops sponsored by Touro College GSE Office of Online Education	○
Online seminar/workshops sponsored by another institution	○
Other resources located on the Web that are sponsored by another institution/company	○
None of the above – I have not utilized any additional resources for my online teaching	○

Format

What form(s) of professional development would you be most likely to take advantage of? [check three in order of preference]

	1	2	3
Formal face-to-face events: a regularly scheduled course or set of training modules	○	○	○
Informal face-to-face events: presentations, brown bag meetings, etc.	○	○	○
Formal online events: Web-based, regularly scheduled course or set of training modules	○	○	○
Informal online events: Web-based presentations, chat sessions,	○	○	○

	1	2	3
etc.			
Self-paced/self-directed materials: Web-based resources, video tapes/DVDs, CDs, handouts, etc.	○	○	○

Course design

Which of the following professional development topics related to course design and development would be of interest to you? [check all that apply]

	Yes
Adapting traditional lecture material to an online environment	○
Adding audio to PowerPoint presentations	○
Choosing appropriate technologies to enhance my online course	○
Converting course materials for online use	○
Creating audio clips	○
Creating graphics	○
Creating online assessment instruments (e.g., quizzes, exams, surveys, etc.)	○
Creating video clips	○
Determining course goals and objectives	○
Determining ways to assess student progress in an online course	○
Developing grading rubrics (i.e., scoring guides)	○
Incorporating library research (student) activities into online courses	○
Making reading assignments (e.g., textbooks, articles) available to students	○
Selecting appropriate teaching and learning methods (e.g., lecture, discussion, problem-based learning, etc.)	○
Understanding the needs of adult learners	○
Better use of Blackboard tools	○
Using video conferencing technologies, such as Zoom, Skype, and Hangouts	○

Delivery

Which of the following professional development topics related to course delivery would be of interest to you? [check all that apply]

	Yes
Building and enhancing professor/student relationships in the online classroom	○
Defeating cheating in exams	○
Facilitating chat sessions	○
Facilitating online discussion forums (e.g., threaded message boards)	○
Facilitating Web conferencing sessions	○
Increasing interactions in an online course (e.g., student-to-student, faculty-to-students)	○
Managing my online teaching workload	○
Plagiarism concerns in online teaching	○
Providing meaningful feedback on assignments	○
Supporting online students	○
Time management	○
Tutoring online	○

Anything else?

Is there any other area of professional development that we haven't identified that you would like included, or is there anything else you would like us to know?

OPTIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

How many years teaching in higher education

- ○ Less than 1
- ○ 1-5
- ○ 6 or more

OPTIONAL GENDER

Gender

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

OPTIONAL AGE

AGE

- ○ Under 25
- ○ 26-35
- ○ 36-45
- ○ 46-55
- ○ 56-65
- ○ Over 65

OPTIONAL STATUS

Full-time faculty, Adjunct faculty, or Adjunct faculty

- ○ Full-time faculty
- ○ Adjunct faculty
- ○ Adjunct faculty

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you found out that you needed to participate in mandated professional development?

2. What is the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of online teaching and learning?

3. What is your experience with teaching online in higher education? Have you also taught face-to-face courses in a higher education setting or elsewhere?

4. How is teaching online different from teaching in a traditional classroom??

5. Other than the professional development series you just completed, what other professional development have you had (here at the college or elsewhere) related to teaching online?

Getting to the Point

6. What kinds of challenges or barriers do you typically experience when you begin to think about changing your online course?

7. Do you believe that you have fewer or different challenges now that you've taken the PD?

8. How have you learned from colleagues during the workshop series?

9. Can you describe in detail your experience with the professional development you just completed?

Impact of Professional Development

10. In what ways have you considered changing your course as a result of the series, if any?

11. Do you think the mandatory professional development was helpful to you? Why or why not?

12. What have you changed in your course(s) because of the mandatory professional development?

13.In what way has your perception about teaching online changed as a result of completing the professional development series?

14. How do you feel about attending mandated professional development?

15. How likely are you to attend other professional development related to teaching and learning online that is offered, but not mandatory?

Appendix C

Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey
Thank you for participating in the faculty development workshops for online faculty. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey.

Awareness

I became more aware of effective online teaching practices after taking the faculty development workshop series.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Neutral

Effective teaching

As a result of the faculty development provided, I will use more effective online teaching practices.

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Neutral

Satisfaction

As a result of the faculty development provided, I am _____ satisfied with the course(s) I teach.

- ○ More
- ○ Less
- ○ Neutral

Student Satisfaction

As a result of the faculty development provided, I believe that students will be _____ satisfied with the course(s) I teach.

- ○ More
- ○ Less
- ○ Neutral

Technology

As a result of the faculty development provided, I am interested to learn about additional technology tools for teaching and learning.

- ○ More
- ○ Less
- ○ Neutral

Strategies

As a result of the faculty development provided, I am interested to learn new strategies to teach online.

- ○ More
- ○ Less

- Neutral

Relevance

Please rate the following

	Relevant/Useful	Neutral	Not useful
Content			
Demonstration			
Examples			
Discussion with Colleagues			
Access to Blackboard Resource/Course site			
Independent Activities			
Self-reflection on Activities or Content			

Factors

Can you describe any factor(s) that contributed to your success in learning and using new tools and strategies for online teaching?

Effectiveness

Please share your evaluation of the effectiveness of the workshop series.

Suggestions

Do you have suggestions to make the workshop series more effective?

Appendix D

1) **Protocol Title:** *A Multiple Case Study of Mandatory Professional Development, Change, and Transformation*
2) ***IRB Review History***

No IRB Review previously submitted.

3) **Objectives**

Describe the purpose, specific aims, or objectives.

The proposed research will explore the perspectives and experiences of online faculty as they participate in mandated professional development with a focus on the specific experiences that lead to personal, transformative learning.

This research will address the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of online teaching faculty participating in mandatory professional development programming to teach online?
2. How has mandatory professional development impacted online faculty course design and delivery?
3. What specific elements or experiences during mandatory online professional development program had the greatest impact on faculty acceptance of the required change?

4) **Background**

The growing demand for online education compels colleges and universities to develop a renewed, goal-oriented focus on the design and delivery of online courses and programs. Two factors have been identified as critical to online course design—skill with technology and knowledge of pedagogy that relates to teaching online, yet many institutions are struggling with their faculty's lack of digital fluency (Dahlstrom & Brooks, 2014; Johnson, Adams Becker, Estrada, Freeman, 2014) and their application of best practices to design and deliver online courses (Ko & Rossen, 2010; Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008; Vai & Sosulski, 2011).

Across the proposed study site's home state, 5.6% of the graduate students are enrolled in distance education courses exclusively, while 6.5% of graduate students are enrolled in some distance education courses. In private, non-profit, Title IV colleges (those meeting requirements to receive federal funding), 8.9% of graduate students are enrolled exclusively in distance education courses, and 13.7% of graduate students take some online courses. About 14% of their graduate students take some or all of their courses online in the Graduate School of Education where this research is proposed take place (NCES, 2014).

In order to improve the design and delivery of online courses, the college at which the research is proposed initiated a period of improvement to strengthen online instructional practices and advance the use of technology for teaching and learning with purposeful, targeted professional development. The purpose of this research is to understand the experiences of faculty as they participate in mandated professional

development to teach online and to determine if faculty learning was transformative, and led to impactful change in teaching practices and attitudes toward online learning. There is little research related to the experiences of graduate education faculty who participate in mandated professional development to teach online and the sustainable changes in practice that may have occurred as a result.

5) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Describe how individuals will be screened for eligibility.

The target population for the proposed study is based on the necessity to gather the most information about the phenomenon of interest: Experiences of faculty who teach online who participated in mandated professional development. This event took place at Touro College in the Graduate School of Education during the calendar years 2014-2015. The total population is approximately 50 and consists of full-time and part-time faculty who teach online and who have completed the mandatory workshop series. These fifty faculty were asked to voluntarily complete a two-question open-ended refection after the workshop was completed. Each faculty member will also be sent a Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey (Appendix C) . The participants are selected based on their connection to the Graduate School of Education and their participation in the mandatory professional development.

The sample will consist of five online faculty members who participated in and completed the mandated professional development workshops. The workshops consisted of six two-hour workshops and at the completion of the workshops series, the individual faculty members submitted one online module that incorporated tools and strategies that were part of the workshop series agenda. Maximum variation sampling will be used to identify the five study participants (Merriam, 2009). Maximal sampling is used to gather the perspectives from a wide variety of participants bounded by the condition of participating in mandated professional development (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2005). Their selection will be based on the impact the professional development has on the design and delivery of their courses. All workshops were held online and facilitated by two co-facilitators. One of the co-facilitators is the researcher for this study. The five faculty members who agree to participate in this study will provide syllabi from the fall 2015 and the fall 2014 semester, they will also be asked to submit their online module that was changed based on the professional development. Additionally, they will be asked for consent for a review of their online course and the artifacts of that course.

Describe the criteria that define who will be included or excluded in your final study sample.

Indicate specifically whether you will include each of the following special populations, one or more boxes must be checked (You may not include members of these populations as subjects in your research unless you indicate this in your inclusion criteria.)

- ☐ *Adults unable to consent*
- ☐ *Individuals who are not yet adults (infants, children, teenagers)*
- ☐ *Pregnant women*

☐ *Prisoners*
☐ *Not Applicable*

6) Study Timelines

- The participant has previously completed the mandatory professional development
- The duration of an individual's participation in the study will be a total of 4 months.
- It is anticipated that to present the study to the five faculty participants and to gain informed consent to enroll in the study, the timeframe will be no longer than seven days. The primary method of communication for this will be through emails with participants.
- The estimated date for the investigator to complete this study is June 15, 2016.

7) Study Endpoints

Describe the primary and secondary study endpoints, or goals the investigator intends to achieve, prove or disprove. Primary endpoints measure outcomes that will answer the primary, or most important, questions being asked by the research protocol.

Primary Endpoints

- *After all participants have participated in the Interview Protocol*
- *After transcribing, analyzing and coding the transcripts, and developing themes based on responses*
- *After conducting an analysis of survey results*
- *After a review of artifacts (syllabi and online module)*

.

8) Procedures or Methods Involved

Describe and explain the study design.

This multiple case study will use qualitative research methods to collect and analyze data (Creswell, 2012). A case study requires extensive data collection to develop "an in-depth exploration of a 'case' or bounded system" and to uncover information to address the three guiding research questions (Creswell, 2012, p. 478). Multiple individual cases will be developed because as Yin (2005) suggests, when the researcher is seeking a general understanding of the phenomenon, adding a second case may offer stronger support for the findings. Data collected and compared between and within multiple cases can improve insight into the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2005). This approach will further the discussion of how to develop and offer professional development programming related to teaching online courses to higher education faculty when the initiative is mandated.

The study involves developing an in-depth understanding of the experiences of five online faculty members who have participated in mandated professional development (Creswell, 2012) through semi-structured interviews, a review of syllabi (pre- and post-workshops), artifacts from courses, and survey responses. The interview will allow the researcher to ask the participants questions about their attitudes, experiences, perceptions, and beliefs about occurrences during the professional development workshops (Yin, 2009). All interview questions will be open-ended questions that are intended to give participants the flexibility to discuss their experiences in the most natural way (Creswell, 2012).

A "Faculty Development Satisfaction Survey" will be made available to the workshop participants (Appendix C). To improve the likelihood of a high return rate, the survey will be administered in accordance with the Three-Phase Survey Administration Procedure (Creswell, 2012). The procedure requires that the questionnaire be distributed three times: The initial distribution, two weeks after the initial distribution, and then again two weeks later. There will be no incentives offered for completing the questionnaire; however, because faculty have not been offered professional development at this level before, they may see it as a "problem of interest" and may be more likely to respond (Creswell, 2012).

A third set of data will be collected through a review of course artifacts generated as a result of the mandated professional development. This is part of the "story of an individual's experiences" (Creswell, 2012, p. 515).

The professional development initiative began in August 2014. Since that time, an anonymous needs assessment survey was distributed to all online faculty who would be required to participate in the mandated professional development. This data has been routinely collected and currently exists. The survey instrument Online Faculty Needs Assessment was adapted from an existing questionnaire Faculty Development Survey and distributed via an electronic survey tool through the college email system (Taylor & McQuiggan, 2008). The items pertaining to specific resources found at the survey developers' home institution were removed. The initial data set will be collected from this instrument and will provide demographic information and a self-report of the needs of faculty for their own learning. The items in the questionnaire can be categorized into three distinct categories: Institutional Support, Desired Resources or Support, Preference for Delivery of Professional Development, and one open-ended question requesting other comments or suggestions. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

At the conclusion of each workshop in the series, a "Reflections and Suggestions" questionnaire was made available. Qualitative data collected immediately after the workshop will provide insight into how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012).

All additional data will be collected from participants who have completed the professional development series as the most change in courses may be seen after the professional development has been completed and the faculty have had time to consider implementing changes in their course design and delivery.

If a participant does not want to answer a question or prefers to end participation in the study, he or she may do so at any time, without any obligation or fear of reprisal.

There will be no long-term follow-up collection of data. All data will be collected and analyzed within four months of IRB approval.

9) Data Banking

All data collected will be kept securely locked in the office of the researcher as well as in a secure folder on the Drexel SharePoint site. The researcher uses a password-protected computer in a locked office in a secure building. The researcher is the only person with access to the office and the computer.

During interviews, notes will be recorded in writing and interview sessions will be recorded with an audio recorder (Creswell, 2012). Depending on timeframe, the interview will be transcribed by the researcher or sent to a reputable third party transcription service. Privacy settings will be used on all research documents, and those settings will be known only to the researcher. All paper documents (syllabi and final projects.) will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's office for seven years after the conclusion of the study.

Describe the proceeds to release data including: the process to request a release, approvals required for release, who can obtain data.

Data from this study will be provided to the study site's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects or to the study site's administrators if the request is made in writing. Data collected from interviews or the review of individual online courses will be made available to the individual participants from which the data was derived.

10) Data Management

Describe the data analysis plan, including any statistical procedures.

Qualitative data analysis will be approached as an iterative process that occurs simultaneous with data collection. Transcripts from interviews will be coded and analyzed for themes according to methods outlined):

- data will be reduced and organized (Miles and Huberman, 1994)
    - codes/categories will be developed through methods that are responsive to the purpose of the research, mutually exclusive, and exhaustive (Merriam, 2009)
- graphically display data to help make patterns and relationships visible
- conclusions verified through rereading transcripts (Miles and Huberman, 1994)

Artifacts collected from courses and survey results have different strengths compared to the interview data and will be used for repeated verification (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013).

11) Provisions to Monitor the Data to Ensure the Safety of Subjects

Not Applicable

12) Withdrawal of Subjects

Participation in the study is voluntary. If a participant leaves the study for any reason, the data derived from that participant will not be included in the findings. If a participant does not want to answer a question or prefers

to end participation in the study, he or she may do so at any time, without any obligation or fear of reprisal.

13) Risks to Subjects

The only potential risk to participants is the loss of privacy. To minimize the risk, all research data will be held on an encrypted, password protected website, the Drexel University SharePoint. Pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names, and all data will be coded to reduce the chance of any identifying information being linked to the participant. Any surveys distributed will not request identifying information about the respondent in any response field. All data collected in the form of artifacts and interview or survey responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and the participants will be assured that none of the information gathered will be made known to their administrators or used to impact their employment. All research data will be held on an encrypted, password protected website, the Drexel University SharePoint.

14) Potential Benefits to Subjects

A potential benefit to the study participant is an increase of their knowledge of their perceptions and attitudes about their own teaching and learning online.

15) Vulnerable Populations

No vulnerable populations (children, cognitively impaired adults, prisoners or pregnant women) will take part tin this study. All participants are higher education faculty who teach online.

To minimize the potential risk of loss of privacy, pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names, and all data will be coded to reduce the chance of any identifying information being linked to the participant. Information about the site at which the research will be conducted will also be provided a pseudonym and the specific location will be identified only by region. The study will take place at a private independent college at which the faculty members work.

16) Multi-Site Research

This is a single site study. Purposeful sampling will be used to select the site for the proposed study because the criteria for selection is directly related to the study and will allow for access to information-rich cases (Merriam, 2009). All participants are higher education faculty in a Graduate School of Education program who also teach online. All required approvals will have been obtained from the main campus at the research site, prior to beginning the procedural phase of the study.

17) Community-Based Participatory Research

The research is intended to address an occurrence in the Graduate School of Education at the study site, that is mandatory professional development to improve online instructional practice and course design. The faculty participants are co-developers of the findings because it is their experiences that are being explored.

18) Sharing of Results with Subjects

Describe the sites or locations where your research team will conduct the research.

- The participants are selected based on their connection to the Graduate School of Education and their participation in the mandated professional development. The faculty who will participate in the study will have participated in mandated professional development workshops to improve the design and delivery of online courses.
- The research will be performed at Touro College 43 West 23rd Street, New York, New York.
- Touro College is the researcher's place of employment, and each of the participants will be asked to participate in interviews at their convenience at this location or online through a secure, password-protected college video conference service. The researcher's direct supervisor, the Interim Dean of the Graduate School of Education, has approved this research.
- The findings from this study will be presented to the study participants and to the Interim Dean of the Graduate School of Education.

19) Resources Available

Describe the resources available to conduct the research:

Justify the feasibility of recruiting the required number of suitable subjects within the agreed recruitment period.

Approximately fifty faculty members participated in the mandatory professional development workshop series and are potential study subjects. It is expected that five (10%) of those will participate as study subjects.

Describe the time that you will devote to conducting and completing the research.

This study will explore the experiences of faculty as they participate in mandated professional development and seeks to expand understandings of the specific transformative elements that impact online faculty teaching practice. The professional development initiative began in September 2014 with fifty faculty participants completing the workshop series to date. Each new group is asked to

complete a needs assessment. The faculty who will be interviewed will have already taken the workshops and will have potentially integrated some of the ideas that were addressed in the workshop series.

Describe the number and qualifications of your staff by describing their experience in conducting research, their knowledge of the local study sites, culture, and society.

The researcher is a doctoral candidate at Drexel University working in a leadership capacity at the study site in the area of online education and faculty development. The researcher has been on writing/research teams for the Graduate School of Education accreditation review and the College-wide Middle States review.

Describe your facilities.

The main location is in New York City. The professional development experience that is the topic of this study took place in an online setting.

Describe your process to ensure that all persons assisting with the research are adequately informed about the protocol, the research procedures, and their duties and functions.

No external individuals will assist with the research.

Prior Approvals

Verbal approval has been obtained from the researcher's direct supervisor, the Interim Dean of the School of Education. The researcher will seek IRB approval from the study site's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

20) Recruitment Methods

The potential study participants will be contacted through email and by phone. This initial contact will explain the purpose of the research, the role of the researcher, the timeframe and procedures of the study. The potential participants will be informed of means through which the protection of their identity will be upheld.

In this study, participants are selected based on their connection to the Graduate School of Education and their participation in the mandated professional development. Maximum variation sampling will be used to identify the five study participants that will be interviewed (Merriam, 2009). Maximal sampling is used to gather the perspectives from a wide variety of participants bounded by the condition of participating in mandated professional development and capture shared experiences (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2005). For this study, five faculty participants will be selected. Their selection will be based on the impact the professional development has on the design and delivery of their courses.

Describe materials that will be used to recruit subjects. (Attach copies of these documents with the application. For advertisements, attach the final copy of printed advertisements. When advertisements are taped for broadcast, attach the final audio/video tape. You may submit the wording of the advertisement prior to taping to preclude re-taping because of inappropriate wording, provided the IRB reviews the final audio/video tape.)

Recruitment email is attached.

21) Number of Subjects

The total number of study participants that will be recruited is five. All five are online faculty who will have participated in mandated professional development provided by the department. It is expected that up to ten potential participants may be screened/informed and that five will choose to participate in the study.

Approximately fifty online faculty who have participated in the mandated professional development workshop series will receive a survey that can be submitted anonymously.

22) Confidentiality

- All research data will be held on an encrypted, password protected website, the Drexel University SharePoint. Provisions to Protect the Privacy Interests of Subjects
- Pseudonyms will be used in place of actual names, and all data will be coded to reduce the chance of any identifying information being linked to the participant. Information about the site at which the research will be conducted will also be provided a pseudonym and the specific location will be identified only by region. Any surveys distributed will not request identifying information about the respondent in any response field. All data collected in the form of artifacts and interview or survey responses will be kept confidential and anonymous and the participants will be assured that none of the information gathered will be made known to their administrators or used to impact their employment.

23) Provisions to Protect the Privacy Interests of Subjects

- Pseudonyms will be used in place of the names of participants and the college.
- All data will be coded to reduce the chance of any identifying information being linked to the participant and only the researcher will have access to the codes.

- The participants will be assured that every effort will be made to protect their identities in the study.
- All information will be securely housed in a password-protected computer, and on Drexel University secure SharePoint server.
- Information the study site will be identified only by region.

24) Compensation for Research-Related Injury

- Not Applicable

25) Economic Burden to Subjects

- Not applicable

26) Consent Process

Indicate whether you will you be obtaining consent:

- Each study participant will provide informed consent before participating in the study. Each individual will be apprised of the details of the purpose of the study and study timeframe. Each Subject/Participant will be provided with the consent form and will be requested to return it within five business days. Participation in the study is voluntary and refusal to participate will not affect the faculty member in any way. The participant can withdraw from the study at any point without retribution.
- The researcher will follow the SOP: Informed Consent Process for Research (HRP-090).

Non-English Speaking Subjects

- Not applicable

Waiver or Alteration of the Consent and Authorization Process (consent will not be obtained, required information will not be disclosed, or the research involves deception).

- Not applicable

Subjects who are not yet adults (infants, children, teenagers)

- *Not applicable*

Cognitively Impaired Adults

- *Not applicable*

Adults Unable to Consent

- *Not applicable*

27) Process to Document Consent in Writing

Describe whether you will be following "SOP: Written Documentation

The researcher will follow the "SOP: Written Documentation of Consent (HRP-091) and will obtain consent from study participants with the Drexel University Consent to Take Part In a Research Study (Appendix D).